I am delighted to be here with all of you today to provide some insight into the work of the United Nations in fighting terrorism and violent extremism. I shall focus especially on the work of the Security Council; the Counter-Terrorism Committee; and the entity that I currently lead, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (or “CTED”). I shall give you a snapshot of the current terrorism threat landscape; the work of the main UN entities that are responsible for fighting terrorism and violent extremism; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on terrorism and counter-terrorism.

No single State or entity can fight global phenomena such as terrorism and violent extremism alone. We must therefore work together, through multilateralism and international cooperation and through a whole-of-Government, whole-of-society, and multi-disciplinary approach that involves not just law enforcement, but also all other relevant stakeholders in society.

There is certainly no reason for complacency. It may be the case that the threat posed by ISIL and Al-Qaida appears to have been lessened somewhat by the travel and other restrictions imposed by Governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since its military defeat in the conflict zones of the Middle East, ISIL has re-emerged in other regions of the world. As indeed has Al-Qaida. Both groups remain highly active across Africa, and their affiliates also remain highly active in South and South-East Asia. Online recruitment and fundraising activities of ISIL and Al-Qaida have also inspired recent attacks in Europe, and we have continued to witness attacks by ISIL in Afghanistan and Iraq.

And we cannot forget the foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) phenomenon. In 2012-2013, thousands of young girls, boys, men, and women, from more than 100 States, travelled to the conflict zones in Iraq and Syria to help establish a new “Caliphate”. Since ISIL’s military defeat, our biggest concern has been addressing the situation of FTFs and their family members who returned from the conflict zones to their countries of origin or to third countries. Moreover, thousands of such individuals currently remain in detainee camps in Iraq and Syria, often living in dire, inhumane conditions. Their situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a danger that the continued uncertainty
surrounding their fate may lead to further radicalization to violence that could have a global impact. We must address their situation through age-sensitive and gender-sensitive approaches that also ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law. We must also assist States to develop comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for persons associated with terrorist groups who return to their countries of origin or relocate to third countries. These issues are of global scale and complexity.

We may see an "alliance of opportunity", with terrorist groups and their affiliates allying themselves with criminal groups and armed non-State groups. In many regions, this situation may be exacerbated by socio-economic problems, political tensions, community frictions, the impact of natural disasters, and feelings of disenfranchisement and frustration, particularly among youth. This may fuel further radicalization to terrorism and violent extremism.

We are also witnessing growing concerns linked to an increase in extreme right-wing (or “racially or ethnically motivated”) terrorism. An increasing number of States visited by CTED on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (or “CTC”) have flagged extreme right-wing terrorism as an issue of concern. An increasing number of States visited by CTED on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (or “CTC”) have flagged extreme right-wing terrorism as an issue of concern. The number of arrests made for extreme right-wing activity has also increased significantly. Other continuing issues of concern are countering the financing of terrorism and countering the use of information and communications technologies for terrorist purposes. There is also increasing concern at the weaponization of the Internet and social media, as well as the potential weaponization of artificial intelligence. The protection of “soft” targets and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks are further sources of concern.

The work of assisting States to counter terrorism is of course carried out under the auspices of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. The CTC is a subsidiary body of the Security Council. We at CTED support the CTC in its work to monitor, promote and facilitate the implementation of Security Council resolutions on terrorism. On the General Assembly side, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (or “UNOCT”) coordinates UN counter-terrorism efforts in accordance with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted by the Assembly in 2006. The CTC is responsible for norm setting and policy development in the Security Council, and the General Assembly focuses on the four pillars of the Global Strategy, which focus, respectively, on addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; preventing and combating terrorism; measures to build States’ capacity; and measures to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The year 2021 is a very important year for both the Council and the Assembly. This year, we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which was adopted in the wake of the “9/11” attacks. And the General Assembly will undertake its Seventh Biennial Review of the Global Strategy. This year thus gives us an opportunity to look back at what we have achieved and where major challenges remain, and to chart a course for the future.

CTED, the entity that I lead, consists of around 50 highly experienced officers, who are experts in their respective fields. I have been particularly impressed by the relentless hard work of my colleagues in the very difficult circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have managed to adapt our working methods to ensure business continuity and maintain the essential constructive dialogue with Member States on behalf of the CTC.

Since its adoption of the landmark resolution 1373 (2001), the Security Council has adopted a number of further resolutions that address various aspects of the fight against terrorism. Just since I assumed my current post, in 2017, the number of such resolutions has expanded significantly. Our unique role at CTED, acting on behalf of the CTC, is to assess all 193 UN Member States’ implementation of those resolutions, identify any implementation gaps, recommend ways to support States in their implementation efforts; and identify good practices that could be shared with other States to help them in their efforts. Through country visits conducted on the Committee’s behalf, we assess States’ legal frameworks and their national strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. We also look at regional strategies, border management and control capacities, human rights-related issues, and the degree to which States’ efforts are gender sensitive and age sensitive. We also consider States’ efforts to counter terrorism financing and look at whether Governments have established partnerships with civil society and other actors to develop whole-of-society, whole-of-Government approaches. We look at whether women are included in decision-making at the highest political level and as political actors in the fight against terrorism.

We conduct this assessment in exactly the same way for all 193 Member States, in a neutral, even-handed and objective manner, using the same methodology. Whenever we visit a State to conduct our assessments, we are joined by experts from a range of partner international and regional organizations who offer expertise in specific technical areas. The inclusion of expertise from other organizations helps ensure that we target our assessments and questions appropriately and effectively. Following the visit, we go back to the CTC to present a first draft of our preliminary findings and then begin to build on that first discussion, continuing our dialogue with the vis-
and other “soft” targets such as theatres, football stadiums, and

The lockdowns imposed by Governments have created a vast, isolated audience of young people who are vulnerable to terrorist recruitment. The Internet has also been used to spread misinformation and conspiracy theories; target certain ethnic and religious groups and migrants; and exploit grievances for radicalization and recruitment purposes. We see differences in different regions, of course, but it is too early to determine whether COVID-19 will ultimately have a significant impact on terrorist activity. This is a situation which must be monitored closely and carefully. We have certainly witnessed a shrinking of the space for civil society organizations and humanitarian aid organizations. Moreover, access to prisons has been reduced, thereby limiting efforts at rehabilitation and reintegration. Governments’ reallocation of funding away from counter-terrorism programmes is also a matter of potential concern. Moreover, over-securitization, prolonged lockdowns and curfews may serve to fuel radicalization to violence over the long term.

Lastly, allow me to briefly inform you about our work to ensure business continuity throughout the pandemic, including by completing the desk reviews of all 193 Member States. I myself have been engaging closely with UN Resident Coordinators, Country Teams, Permanent Representatives, and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to consolidate our existing relationships and dialogue and develop ways to ensure tailored, target follow-up to our assessments, on the ground. We have also organized a number of virtual events and debates on various themes, including aviation security and maritime security, and were pleased to witness the Security Council’s unanimous adoption earlier this year, under the Tunisian presidency of the CTC, of a presidential statement on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

In conclusion, I look forward to the resumption of in-person political discussions with all our counterparts, including Heads of State and Governments, ministers, Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, the leaders of our many partner organizations around the globe, and all the experts and other actors who make such a vital contribution to our work. It is essential that we at CTED continue our unique work to monitor, promote and facilitate Member States’ implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on terrorism, and it is equally essential that we work to ensure that those resolutions are implemented with the same effectiveness and efficiency by all 193 Member States. For, if we fail to do this, then we break the global security chain that is so essential to maintaining peace and security around the globe.

Thank you. I wish you a healthy, secure, and safe 2021.
You can see in Article 1, the purpose of UNITAR is to enhance their diplomatic services and other necessary knowledge. To create an institute to prepare those newly elected diplomats world. So the General Assembly in 1963 decided it needed and well-established civil service diplomats from around the manner. These agencies were to be able to cope with senior or UN agencies and to represent their countries in a dignified diplomacy for addressing their issues and coming to New York a need to prepare those newly independent countries in di
ternational world order was needed. By 1957-63 there was a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no area of the human society that has not been touched by it. So, let's start with the origins. As you know, the United Nations Institute for training and research was created in 1963. There was a need in that period of the colonization process when the United Nations was created.

Remember UN was created in San Francisco in 1945. but the work of the United Nations started in the 1940s, even before World War II ended.

We were already in the cold war period and the confrontation of political powers was already starting to take shape. These confrontations led to a lot of new states becoming independent and the period of decolonization. If you recall, the United Nations Chapter speaks about the United Nations Trusteeship Council. Today, together with the Security Council, ECOSOC, the General Assembly, and International Court they are the charter bodies that we call the United Nations.

The Trusteeship Council was created to lead those new countries and democracies to get full benefit through independence. The benefit of participating and being a part of the new international world order was needed. By 1957-63 there was a need to prepare those newly independent countries in diplomacy for addressing their issues and coming to New York or UN agencies and to represent their countries in a dignified manner. These agencies were to be able to cope with senior and well-established civil service diplomats from around the world. So the General Assembly in 1963 decided it needed to create an institute to prepare those newly elected diplomats from independent countries in North Africa to help them create their diplomatic services and other necessary knowledge. You can see in Article 1, the purpose of UNITAR is to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations by achieving major objectives of the organization by performance and function. This is the real origin; the needs that the international community had between 1963 and 1983. The United Nations started with 51 countries and now we are 193. But from 1963 to 1973 that first decade, is when most of the member states became independent and became members of the United Nations. That was the crucial period and UNITAR was doing a lot of work. UNITAR was preparing those diplomatic academies and diplomats.

The General Assembly decided that the headquarters of UNITAR were in New York, and we have our offices on First Avenue and 44th street just across the United States Mission to the United Nations, in front of the UNHQ. By 1993 it was decided that we have to live and work through voluntary contributions. That means the Institute was not receiving any income from the assessed obligatory contributions from the Member States to maintain the United Nations. Financing voluntarily creates a handicap for the Institute. since only when the finances and the national levels are in good shape the countries’ governments are willing to share that wealth with institutes like UNITAR or other organizations that were created. When the finances around the globe are bad, for example, today with COVID-19 governments are really worried about how to conquer this pandemic, finances become scarce and if you are in the voluntary contribution section, UNITAR is the last institute you will think about when providing financial support. By 1993 the institute ran into a very difficult financing situation, and our building was taken over by the UN Secretariat to be able to maintain the Institute. As New York is a very expensive city, the Swiss Government made an offer to host UNITAR in Geneva, a big place for the United Nations – especially agencies. Almost all United Nations agencies are based there, and it gives us an opportunity to institute, reconfigure, and re-organize, and to be seen as viable for the future.

A new model was created and new directors starting to work to put the Institute on the map again. This is the second part of what I wanted to talk about. The institute is organized with headquarters in Geneva, our main office remains in New York and this is the office I took over. Our second biggest one is in Hiroshima, which was dedicated to moving disarmament and collaboration of the Japanese government and the prefecture of Hiroshima. UNITAR also has programs in Africa and in the Asia-Pacific Region and another office in Nigeria, which dedicated to the development of African Countries. Since funding is very difficult, we depend on our activities for developing countries’ contributions from Sweden, Italy, Spain, Japan. We prepare projects and help with cooperation for development and so that’s how we managed to keep this organization. We have created a strategic framework for every four
years. The one you are seeing now is the strategic framework for 2018-2021. The Executive Director of the Institute is Mr. Ramesh Mikilset, a former diplomat from India who has devoted all his career in New York to Sustainable Development. He was also the Secretariat of the Sustainable Development Goals for the conference of RIO Plus 20, which was the conference that shaped the SDGs.

This strategy can be conceived in 4 pillars. There are the pillars of people and places and then there are two more of prosperity, planet and cross-fertilizing knowledge and expertise. These pillars encompass the 17 sustainable goals for us. We can target a specific sustainable development on development and cross-fertilize knowledge expertise because the Sustainable Development Goals are interlinked, and need to help each other achieve their goals since all of them are equally important. You cannot combat poverty if you don’t have a good education, if you don’t have good health services, if you don’t have an economic framework at the country level.

You cannot combat poverty if you don’t have a good enough education if you don’t have good health services if you don’t have an economic framework at the country level. “

Therefore, that is why we have this cross-vectorizing approach to the Sustainable Development Goals. So, if you go back to the priorities of the strategic framework, this one was one of the most important elements for us. We have to provide high-quality learning solutions to address the capacity development of individuals, organizations, and institutions. We are to advise and support governments, UN, and other partners with knowledge services including those that are technology-based. Information about technology now is a very important element of our services. We have to facilitate knowledge and expertise sharing through the network and innovative processes like the one we are doing with you today. This is part of one clear example of our core function, and we have to have integrated innovative strategies approaches, and methodologies into our learning knowledge. For example, I can talk about webinars and video conferences in response to the pandemic. This is a clear example of how the number four is applied.

I’m going to make a little parenthesis here because when I was talking about origins and organization, I mentioned to you that we were created to help diplomatic states and diplomatic services for member states in the United Nations. Diplomatic training as the United Nations agenda has been evolving through major conferences. There was a need to train those diplomats in particular at Beijing plus 20 and Rio plus 20, Denmark Social Level, Monterey Finance for Development and create an expanding market for us because they encompassed not only the foreign service of the governments but also, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Education, with the Millennium Developing Goals and broaden the training needs of member states. The Institute was forced to expand on all those areas by understanding where the SDGs are. There is no single area in which the Institute cannot interlink or interface with governments at every different level. The evolving agenda of the United Nations creates an evolving need for member states and the Institute needs to supply this sharing experience about methodical approaches for education and for training their senior and junior diplomats.

We also have to keep in mind that member states come to New York at the highest level; Head of States, Prime Ministers, Princes, Princesses, Kings, Head of Government – every year to New York to tackle specific issues of the agenda. Those diplomats and those missions in New York play a crucial role in preparing statements, reports and resolutions of every single General Assembly so they are able to go back to their peers in their own country and highlight how the United Nations works. This is how we evolved our organization and our services and other products to member states and how that has been diversified through the evolving agenda of the United Nations which has created an evolving need for member states in every specific area. We have to start understanding that the United Nations itself was created with the specific purpose of avoiding wars for future generations like WW1 and WW2. That was the main scope, create a legal system that is available to member states for resolving disputes in a tribunal and specific way. That’s why the ICJ (international Court of Justice) was created and the model we have now. The former Soviet Union was broken up by their processes and the 10-15 countries became members of the United Nations each with their specific issues that need to be resolved.

We evolved, reorganized, and created a new configuration to fulfill those pillars. We can go to the strategic framework of this example, we promote peace, inclusive societies, we can share those documents online for all the participants that want to have them. The pillar for promoting peace is dealing with providing services, training, negotiating, and how to mediate multilateral negotiations. People’s well-being is related to the whole. For example, COVID-19 crisis is dealing with that and we are sharing knowledge with the Member States, interlinking them and trying to provide the most support that we can on metadata and methodological approaches. This will help further understanding and share new trends. The planet is also another one of the biggest pillars that we have. We try to see
how to understand life below water, climate change and renewable energy. The other was cross-fertilizing and economic development. Those pillars interlink among themselves and then you can allocate individual goals in a circle which evolves and each of these pillars feed up the needle of the other. This is the most important thing to understand about services.

At this point, I’m going to talk a little bit about my office in New York for UNITAR. At the beginning, we saw the need to create a new approach and to develop a more aggressive understanding of our service for diplomats in New York. We can call this capacity building and training sessions, but in a nutshell, it is education – per se you can be a diplomat, a very seasoned diplomat posted in Moscow, in Kenya, you have been posted in different parts of the world in a diplomatic setup, a bilateral setup. New York is a multilateral setup and the agendas, and the pace and negotiations are different. When you are in the bilateral setup, you have a counterpart and you have to negotiate a trade agreement or a cultural exchange which is two people negotiating across the table. The outcome in a multilateral setup is you have to engage in multilateral conversations, you don’t talk to one, you talk to 193 counterparts. Each one of them have their interests, structure, and vision of the whole thing that has to be tackled and understood. Moreover, how to understand these multilateral settings and how to negotiate them is a big challenge for new diplomats who are starting their careers, or for a senior diplomat who has been only in a bilateral setup. They’ve never been in a mutual class, even if they understand international law history, having a conference room and negotiating with 20-40 diplomats for any single region (Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East) and seeing everyone raising their hand, making adjustments and language changes, can be frustrating.

We created a set of programs on understanding multilateral negotiations, understanding conflict resolution of the standard mediation and what the best part of it is. Since we are enabling this conversation, we are not a faculty per se, we are just enabling the best practices the best methodology to reach out to those diplomats. Where does this knowledge come from? It comes from academia, from big universities, from the United Nations, Secretary of State – those who have been following these conferences or these meetings for years from non-governmental organizations that are the grassroots level who work in the field and interact with people.

We amalgamated all this knowledge, we motivated them and then we put it together. That’s how this catalogue of UNITAR came about, we send it every January for the next year. We are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, it’s a very proud year for UNITAR and for the United Nations itself. I was having a conversation recently at another presentation and I was telling the participants that the United Nations came out alive after the big crisis and failure of the previous international understandings along with how to negotiate and how to resolve the League of Nations into the United Nations Society. Who could imagine that the 75th anniversary would come after all of these up and downs and now the world faces a global pandemic like COVID-19. We have to celebrate the 75th anniversary on those premises, not being able to meet in face-to-face in large conference rooms in the Secretariat or in Geneva but as we are doing today through a computer. When we created the United Nations, the computer was just something futuristic, the most important thing was to have a good coffee or tea for a round table, to sit there and talk, take notes with pens and pencils. But now we are virtual. It’s amazing how when Facebook was coming to life 15-20 years ago, this generation was learning how to communicate among themselves and we were arguing “do your homework, do physical activity, don’t stand in front of the computer!” Ironically, now we are all in front of the computer. That generation is handier with tools whereas people like me have to learn how to do that. We are basically in a big Facebook set up today through zoom teams and the virtual wheelchair platform.

“We’re going to celebrate the 27th anniversary of the order to maintain our community’s health in good parameters. So, this is the catalog, we envisage these projects are programs with academies like Columbia University. We can put it that we develop a multilateral negotiation, mediation and mediation clinics. The clinic in the Law School of Columbia University is for every lawyer that goes to Columbia. A mediation clinic professor Alex Carter is one of the leaders in this field. She recently made a big publication about how to negotiate a hand to take 10 big questions for negotiation with the Sweden Government who provides support for us. We have been doing this project for almost 3-4 years. It’s a very successful program that we organized and supported them through the Swedish Government and then the beneficiaries go directly with the Columbia
School of Law. They receive a certificate by UNITAR with the logos of the school of Colombia. They completed a setup of three courses, the certificate is signed by the Dean of the Law school of Columbia and by the UNITAR Executive Director.

Another project that we developed with very seasoned diplomats with more experience is the Global Diplomacy Initiative. The Global Diplomacy Initiative is a project in which the UNITAR offered to the students in the tri-state area basically in the face-to-face format. We developed a series of training with ambassadors or former ambassadors and then with the professors from different colleges and senior officers of the UN, the UN Secretariat and we accredited them. They have meetings and training in the United Nations Head Quarters every Friday where they complete specific number of hours. Upon completion, they receive a certificate from UNITAR and some colleges like John Jay give them credit. These students, who are students of international relations, history, or diplomacy in colleges of New York don’t have access to the units that open the doors of diplomacy and so they come are accredited, and they are sitting among diplomats through the whole project. They receive individual classes; they learn and see how real negotiation happens and this is an opportunity that is very difficult to copy. We have experienced panelists such as the former Ambassador of Ukraine to New York, Yuriy Sergeyev, and other high officials for the Secretariat and former ambassadors. So, it’s a very important program in the New York office. We also have core programs for New York Diplomats which include drafting resolutions for multilateral negotiations, training sessions or preparations for the ECOSOC meetings in mid-year in July. The learning center is organized with UNDESA for preparation for high-level political problems that happen every year.

This year we used those sessions, learning and training for the Sustainable Goals implementation in the COVID-19 era because this pandemic has already a branded name which is defining the 75th anniversary of international work of the United Nations in a very broad context, adapting as you can see, the services to the actual needs of the Member States. That’s how we provide those services, these are just examples of the offerings of products that we develop. Since we have been having these challenges, having these webinars and events organized through zoom or video conferencing like with you today. We also have to be innovative. We will launch the guidelines for the United Nations drafting resolution that we can cover. This is a guideline that we always teach, it’s a course that takes two days and is usually face to face. Normally we do a kind of General Assembly sharing, this has been changed and now we have to do this virtually – so we have decided to go through the training and creating guidelines for online that I will be putting in an E-book format for our member states to delegate. These guidelines go from zero to ten in a flowchart with step-by-step explanations with what the process is of the United Nations. Why is this so important? Mostly because the work of the diplomats in New York is devoted to negotiating, draft, present, defend or promoting a country’s interest and how to do that through a resolution process. So, you start with a big idea, and you end with adopting the resolution. This is the step-by-step process that you have to follow. The guidelines are less than 100 pages, and you don’t need to have a lecture on them, but we create a little cartoon-based explanation to promote all. These documents are in French, English, Arabic and Spanish. Chinese and Russian are more complex, and I am still looking for volunteers who want to finance these two translations. There will be an e-book in the United Nations library so people can download it for a basic fee. We hope this new product will help new diplomats or whoever wanted to understand what a resolution in the United Nations is and why delegates meet to do these negotiations, and the rule of procedures with the understanding of certain topics.

I was asked to also talk a little bit on how we can expand knowledge in other areas which we can develop. This is a very important question because we can really enhance learning, but our hands are tied because we depend on voluntary contributions. We can develop new products and place them in front of Member States, NGO’s or colleagues for financing of these projects, otherwise, it’s very difficult for us to produce new materials. We continue to search and have negotiations with academia, with NGOs, with the UN Secretariat and with partners that may be interested in the work of the UN. The UN is an organism by itself, it lives by itself and it exists by itself. It is a conglomerate of states that come together to feed, to maintain, and to dictate the policies and actions of the United Nations. One of the first questions I put to my diplomats is “what do you understand is the United Nations?” The understanding has been clarified as this conglomerate by shareholders and the shareholders are the member states. If the large majority by consensus decided an action like the Sustainable Development Goals, everybody is involved and everybody is responsible for it. If out of 15, 10 or 11 said no we don’t like this, well it is what the Security Council decides. However, the Security Council is a composition of member states, it’s every single government that is responsible.

So, this is kind of a closing remark, I hope I have filled up the expectation. Normally, I say this to my beneficiaries, we don’t like to give lectures – we like to share our knowledge. This is our beauty, we put the people in front of participants or beneficiaries, but they also have something to say, a degree of education, of knowledge, and they can contribute to the exchange of information and make this work for the future generations.
ZOO NOSES AND PANDEMICS:
THE ONE HEALTH APPROACH

Part 1 of 2

I want to thank Dr. Christine Durbak for inviting me, and Dr. Richard Reed of the Bayonne Animal Clinic for recommending me to give this talk. We are going to talk about zoonoses, animal infectious agents that are transmitted to people from animals that cause diseases and even pandemics, like we are dealing with now.

ZOO NOTIC DISEASE:

A zoonotic disease is an infectious disease, caused by an infectious disease pathogen of animals, that can be naturally transmitted into humans. There are over 200 types of zoonotic diseases today. Sixty percent of all human infectious diseases have originated from animals and 75% of all emerging new human infectious diseases will come from animals. It is important for us to control or prevent zoonotic diseases that are caused by 1) viruses including (SARS-CoV-2, COVID–19), 2) bacteria-TB (Mycobacterium tuberculosis) which has been around for eons, 3) fungi (Histoplasma capsulatum), 4) prions- (Bovine spongiform encephalopathy) mad cow protein that can cause neurologic diseases in both animals and people. 5) Parasites (Plasmodium falciparum), such as malaria, are still present in many parts of the world. 6) arthropods, fleas, ticks and lice can cause skin diseases- dermatitis, and of course, they can also transmit the infectious agents from animals to humans.

PREVALENCE OF DISEASES:

The level or prevalence of occurrence of diseases is important. 1) A sporadic disease, is a disease that occurs infrequently, irregularly, sporadically. 2) A disease cluster is a group of the same disease occurring in a place. 3) An endemic disease is a constant occurrence of a disease, usually in a geographically defined area. 4) Hyperendemic disease is the same as the endemic disease, but it occurs at a higher level. 5) An outbreak is an endemic disease occurring in a limited geographic area such as in neighborhoods, kennels or schools. 6) An epidemic is a sudden increase of a disease above the normal for that population. 7) The worst occurrence is a pandemic, a disease that occurs in several countries, or continents, or is worldwide – what we have right now with COVID-19.

THE ONE HEALTH APPROACH TO ZOO NOTIC DISEASES:

The One Health Approach, consists of scientific professions: veterinarians, physicians, PhDs, dentists, nurses, engineers, and statisticians working together to protect the health of people and animals.

EARLY HISTORY OF ZOO NOTIC DISEASES-
“Heirloom Pathogens”:

Early human ancestors evolved into the homo sapiens and, 12,000 years ago during the Neolithic time, the hunter-gatherer societies lived nomadically and hunted wild animals. They abandoned that lifestyle and formed villages and began to domesticate animals. They also began agriculture, a much easier lifestyle.

This is a village in Africa that I photographed in Kenya in the Serengeti plain. Early villages were like this, and still are in many parts of Africa. They are constructed in a circle where their living quarters and their animals are kept, to protected them from the wild animals. During the day, they take the
That's why there can be quite a bit of damage before they seek help of a physician. There is no person-to-person transmission of Bartonella.

Bartonella in cats is endemic along the seacoasts of the United States, in fact, it's hyperendemic (42-49%) prevalence in healthy cats along the southern coastal states. As you travel north or east, it's less prevalent and when you get into the drier or colder states, where fleas are less frequent, there is much less Bartonella in the cats and less zoonotic disease in people. Human Bartonella zoonotic diseases can affect any tissue. In the brain it can cause inflammation, much like COVID-19. What Bartonella does is cause general inflammation. They can cause cognitive effects, brain fog, depression and dysfunction due to inflammation in the brain. They also can cause large granulomas of the brain which cause defects, seizures and motor neuron defects which can affect gait. Enlargement of lymph nodes, vegetative lesions on the heart valves of people can occur where the heart valve must be replaced. Arthritis occurs in many people with Bartonella inflammation as do granulomas of the spleen, and the liver which can be life-threatening. Inflammation and granulomas of the retina is obviously particularly important. A number of people, that are not diagnosed quickly enough, have granulomatous inflammation in the retina, can lose partial sight or the entire sight in that eye.

**MAJOR ZOONOTIC PANDEMICS**

Endemic malaria still kills many people in Africa. The main preventive is still low-tech mosquito nets for sleeping. Rabies causes between 30-50,000 deaths a year from stray unvaccinated dogs biting people in many parts of the third world, especially India and Africa. HIV is still with us, but we have very effective treatment-regimes which can keep people alive with a manageable disease. This was accomplished under the leadership of Dr. Anthony Fauci at the NIAID. We don’t yet have a good effective vaccine for HIV, but maybe the new technology of mRNA will now facilitate an HIV vaccine development.
SARS-CoV-2 AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
SARS-CoV-2 COVID-19 probably originated from a Horseshoe bat at or near the Wet Market in Wuhan China. This bat harbors a nearly identical coronavirus which may have infected an intermediate animal, such as a pangolin or a snake, which made it more infectious for humans. There is some thought that this virus may have escaped from the nearby virologic lab in Wuhan.

COVID-19 VACCINES:
Our COVID-19 vaccines are very effective. Two of the three vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) – that is they only have the mRNA from the virus safely encased inside fat globules to protect it from degradation after inoculation. Once inside the inoculated person’s cells, the mRNA instructs the of production the viral proteins on the person’s cell surfaces. There is no virus inoculated in the vaccine. Once introduced into the person, the mRNA cannot go backwards and change the person’s DNA (genes). Unfortunately, some misinformation has been spread that indicates the vaccine can alter the person’s genes—this is not true. Also, there’s no microchip in the vaccines that can trace people around the world.

As of May 17, 2021, the Johns Hopkins University, Coronavirus Resource Center data tracking site, reported 32,940,846 people have been fully vaccinated in the US. Unfortunately, 585,970 people have died of the disease. We now have 123 million fully vaccinated people in the U.S., but we have 332 million total population. This means we have about 37% of people with herd immunity, whereas virologists and statisticians are telling us we need 60-75% of people to be vaccinated for sufficient herd immunity. So, we are only halfway there. There have been 223 deaths in people who were fully vaccinated according to the CDC, however they are not sure that the people who died, died from COVID-19. Even if all these deaths were due to COVID-19, the vaccine failure rate would be a miniscule 223/1,1500,000 = 0.00193% as of May 10, 2021. In addition, there are 7 billion people in the world. We need to vaccinate 75% of all people, otherwise there maybe outbreaks coming back to us in the US with variants that are

COVID-19 AND ANIMALS:
Origin, Host Range & Reverse Zoonosis of SARS-CoV-2
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmii.2020.06.006
1684-1182/Copyright © 2020, Taiwan Society of Microbiology. Published by Elsevier Taiwan LLC. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license(http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) with modification.

We are not the only animal that is susceptible to the virus. Pet and wild cats, mink, ferrets and primates are highly susceptible to infection from people. People transmit the virus via respiratory droplets to animals in the households, zoos and breeding facilities. Millions of minks have been killed because of infection from their handlers at mink farms and a few minks have been able to transmit the virus back to human beings (reverse zoonosis) and even to feral cats living near the farms. More information regarding SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 in animals is available on our website www.natvetlab.com.
much more dangerous. We’ve got to share our vaccines with the world!

HERD IMMUNITY:

Herd immunity is something that we take pride in as veterinarians. But humans don’t live in herds, animals do. It’s a veterinary term first coined by Adolph Eichhorn and George Potter in 1916. Herd immunity occurs when a sufficient percent of a population becomes immune to infection, either through vaccination or exposure. If you have most of the exposed individuals immune, it achieves herd immunity, disrupts the chain of infection, and stops or slows the virus or the infectious agent spread from infected individuals to others. Since they’re immune, they cannot be infected and if they are infected, very few should die.

This table shows the percent of the herd immunity that we need to protect people from various infectious diseases. Influenza for example, where every year we get a flu shot, you only need 30 to 44% of people to be vaccinated to at least stop major pandemics from occurring. I think we’re reaching that even though the vaccines are not very good. They are good enough to prevent major pandemics. Ebola, a horrible disease in Africa spread by body fluids, is still frightening because outbreaks still occur. For Ebola, you need only 60 percent herd immunity to stop that disease from occurring even in remote villages. For the COVID-19 droplet transmission, virologists calculate we need, based on the ability of the virus to replicate, 60-75% of people to be immunized. We need up to 75% protection by vaccination. For Polio, herd immunity is 80-86%. Polio has been reduced worldwide by a very strong multi-national vaccination outreach program. Diphtheria, rubella, and measles are some of the most infectious diseases on earth. You need almost 95% of all people to be vaccinated against measles. As you probably have heard, because of religious exemptions or anti-vaxxers, people in certain areas don’t have their children immunized and that is where measles outbreaks have occurred.

ERADICATION OF ZOONOTIC PATHOGENS:

We have been successful at eradicating two very lethal pathogens from earth. With proper scientific protocols, we can repeat this success with other pathogens.

Smallpox, a terrible disease, has been eliminated from earth, by employing a vaccine program for the last 20 years. The World Health Organization certified the global eradication in 1980.

The second virus eliminated was the Rinderpest virus that killed ungulates-cattle, buffalo, antelope etc., food animals that many people relied on in Africa and other countries. In 2010, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization announced that it was totally eradicated from earth. This verifies that, by using proper scientific procedures we can control and even eliminate zoonotic pandemic infectious disease organisms.

Q&A

Q. Do you support the division of regions into zones during a pandemic? Does this affect the number of cases? Have you noticed a positive trend after zoning?

A. Yes, I support zoning because there are different amounts of disease in certain parts of the country, so we don’t all need the same lockdown precautions that other zones do. You need to understand what the zones are and what has to be done. The recommendations from scientists should be the guide.

Q. Do you think that we will need to wait for new mutations of COVID-19 and please elaborate a little more on how COVID-19 has affected animals?

A. The mutations are very worrisome. There are 2 types of viruses: those that have RNA genomes and those that have DNA genomes. DNA viruses do not mutate very quickly, but RNA viruses, such as the HIV AIDS virus and coronaviruses mutate more often. That’s bad because a mutation every viral replication cycle, may make the virus more transmissible and more pathogenic. We hope, and currently the data show, that the current vaccines are protective against, not only the original virus, but many of the strains of mutant viruses coming from South Africa, UK, Brazil and India. I worry that mink, cats and ferrets may allow for more deadly and more infectious viral mutants to occur and then if those viruses get back into the people, we could then need a whole new set of vaccines. It would be devastating if some endangered species of primates or cats die from their SARS-CoV-2 infections. More information regarding SARS-CoV-2 COVID-19 in animals is available on our website www.natvetlab.com.
Children are not just little adults, and this has important implications for preventing harm from environmental contaminants, said pediatricians Drs. Ruth Etzel and Sophie Balk. They spoke with WIT about a new book for parents that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published in early 2021: Protecting Your Child’s Health: Expert Answers to Urgent Environmental Questions. The book is based on information found in the 4th edition of AAP’s Pediatric Environmental Health, a handbook for pediatricians.

Children are closer to the ground, and so children will receive a high dose of any pollutant that’s heavier than air because they’re breathing closer to the ground. Children also have a higher food intake and metabolic rate, pound per pound, than adults. Children have different excretion of chemicals than adults, and they have a longer time after they are first exposed to a chemical for its effects to become apparent. For example, if they breathe a chemical that can cause cancer, children have some 30-40 years before they exhibit the symptoms of cancer. Children have a lot of hand-to-mouth activity, putting everything that they find into their mouths, because that’s how they explore their world. Children breathe more air pound per pound than adults. Children have a higher skin surface area than adults, and they have ongoing development of many of their organs, especially their brain and nervous system. If children are exposed to chemicals that damage the nervous system when they are very young, it may permanently impair the growth and development of their nervous system.

Their discussion also focused on global environmental health issues. Children living in high-income countries have different environmental exposures than children living in low-income countries. For example, in a high-income country like the United States, parents may be concerned about lead in tap water, especially if tap water is being used to reconstitute formula to feed to young infants, or parents might be concerned about pesticide residues in children’s foods. In low-income countries, however, parents may be concerned because there’s no tap for running water, or they might be concerned children are drinking pesticides from reused soft drink bottles, which can cause a child to die. Parents in low-income settings might be concerned about children’s exposure to mercury from small-scale gold mining. The kind of hazards that parents are most concerned about will vary depending on where the family lives.

The World Health Organization estimates that about a third of all diseases among children could be prevented by modifying the environment. For a typical country, different kinds of regulations may exist to try to prevent children’s exposure to contaminants in food, contaminants in cosmetics, contaminants in indoor air, and pollutants in water, but there are many times when children fall through the cracks and become exposed to contaminants, even though there might be legislation designed to prevent dangerous exposures.

One of the problems is that countries spend only a very modest share of their resources on prevention. The World Health Organization found that in many countries only a tiny share of resources are allocated to prevention. The world spends more than 5.3 trillion U.S. dollars on health expenditures, but the vast majority, more than 96%, is spent on treatment and overhead. Tobacco, alcohol, unsafe sex, and other causes are responsible for many preventable deaths, so there’s a strong argument for increased funding for prevention.

Longevity improvements in the United States have occurred not so much because of improved treatment of diseases, but because of 20th century advances in sanitation, housing, and measures to improve the safety of food and milk. It is time to enhance the importance of primary prevention by implementing population-wide proactive upstream actions. Such actions include eliminating indoor smoke or eliminating lead in gasoline and paint or providing safe drinking water. These actions ensure that the unhealthy condition never has a chance to occur.

For many years, smoking was considered very glamorous. In the 1950s the first epidemiological studies demonstrated that smoking caused cancer. It wasn’t until 1969 that cigarette advertising on television and radio was banned in the United States. It took 60 years until the World Health Organization put primary prevention into place. That was in 2003 when 192 member states unanimously adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. In 2010, the Motion Picture Association of America included smoking as a factor in rating movies. It was a long struggle to try to put prevention into place, even for something as well-known and understood as cigarette smoking.

Public health officials encourage families to take voluntary steps to make their homes 100% smoke-free. Some countries have prohibited smoking in
cars; Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Cyprus, Mauritius, South Africa, and the UAE have taken this step. In Scotland, following clean indoor air legislation, there was a reduction in low birthweight babies, preterm births, intrauterine growth retardation, and hospital admissions for childhood asthma.

Another intervention is the prevention of pollution from indoor cooking. In 2010, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves was formed; their goal was to have a hundred million homes adopt clean and efficient stoves by 2020. The clean cookstoves reduced smoke and carbon monoxide emissions by 80 percent.

Lead is one of the more important pollutants that affect children; the WHO estimates that lead could be responsible for as much as 15 or 20 percent of mental retardation. Hundreds of millions of children and pregnant women are exposed to different sources of lead. There are many sources of lead in homes, including lead from chipping and deteriorating lead paint. Exposure to lead is damaging during infancy, but it continues to be damaging throughout life. During infancy, the largest exposure may come from water if lead-contaminated water is used to make the infant formula. During toddlerhood, exposure to lead may come from lead paint chips, soil, and dust. During adulthood, exposure to lead may come from occupational exposures. Lead exposures may result in lifelong effects for children. An affected child may exhibit aggressive behavior, inattentive behavior, misbehavior of all kinds, and trouble learning. Teenagers and children with higher lead levels have higher risks of skipping school, becoming unintentionally pregnant, or starting to smoke. Among adults, lead poisoning can lead to memory loss, high blood pressure, and heart attacks.

Public health officials have been working for over 100 years to try to get rid of lead. At the end of the 20th-century, most developed countries had phased out leaded gasoline, but very few developing countries had done so. The United Nations in 2002 set concrete targets for completing the elimination of leaded gasoline. They began a campaign with a small staff in Nairobi, and they enlisted scientists, doctors, government professionals, industries, and international organizations to help eliminate lead in gasoline. By 2008 almost all countries around the world had taken lead out of their gasoline. The most recent data show that all but one country (Algeria) have now removed lead from gasoline. As the lead was removed from gasoline, levels of lead in children's blood fell dramatically.

Over a hundred years ago, many of the European countries banned lead paint. France did it as early as 1909, and Belgium, Poland, and Spain were doing it in the 1920s and early 1930s; Cuba did it in 1934. The United States didn't remove lead from paint until 1978. As those countries phased lead out of paint the paint industry began looking for customers in India, China, and other parts of the Asia-Pacific region. Today children are still being exposed to lead paint in many countries, because even though some of them have regulation, there's little surveillance or testing. A partnership to eliminate lead in paint was launched in 2010, mainly to raise awareness among customers and to promote certification of paint products to help consumers recognize the paints and coatings that have no lead. That has been quite successful; governments are requiring product labeling to help make customer choices more informed.

The climate is changing and parents' personal choices can help to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide. Families might want to calculate their carbon footprint and to reduce it by not using as much energy. For example, if a person usually drives to a nearby park or store, they can try bicycling or walking. If a person uses a clothes dryer, they can consider putting clothes on the line instead and telling the stories to family and friends, so others can consider calculating and reducing their carbon footprints as well. All people should participate fully in the political process, so that legislators are empowered to make societal choices.

There are a lot of win-win choices in the actions that can be taken to reduce carbon emissions. People can burn calories instead of carbon by using active transport, and that has a result of cleaning the air and fighting obesity. Muscle power is carbon neutral on the right diet. When people enjoy social time instead of screen time, that means more interactive family and group activities, and this helps to combat isolation and depression. When people eat lower on the food chain, it supports local farms and the local economy, which also improves nutritional quality and lowers the risk of chronic diseases. And energy efficiency saves money. Wealth actually supports health. Policymakers can replace fossil fuels with clean renewable energy and develop smart local grids, because this reduces emissions and prevents new emissions, results in less cardiopulmonary disease and death, and gets the necessary energy to households. Politicians can improve public transportation and create bike lanes, because that reduces the need for having a personal vehicle, decreases congestion, noise, air pollution, and promotes active transport. Finally, people can eat lower on the food chain. A diet lower on the food chain can support the local farms and the local economy and prevent obesity and lower the risk of chronic
diseases. Environmental health doesn't receive much attention, because it's an invisible issue, but it is gradually becoming more visible.

It is important for parents to take steps in their homes to reduce children's exposures to environmental contaminants. The new book, available from the AAP at: https://shop.aap.org/protecting-your-children-health-paperback/ offers parents information about keeping children and adolescents safe from environmental hazards in their homes and communities. It is equally important to ask politicians to get involved in effective interventions at the national and international level to eliminate pollutants from the environment before they have a chance to harm children. An unacceptable number of kids are harmed or die unnecessarily from environmentally related diseases. Preventive interventions are effective in protecting children, and it is time to garner the political commitment and resources to reduce these preventable deaths and illnesses among children.

The main source of voter frustration is not the goals of government, but its paralytic operating system. No one has the ability to roll up their sleeves and take responsibility. I'm going to start with a couple of stories that illustrate what I'm going to argue is a foundational flaw in the operating systems of modern government.

A couple of years ago, a tree fell in a creek in Franklin, New Jersey. It caused flooding, and the mayor sent in a backhoe to pull the tree out of the creek. Then the town lawyer said, “that's a Class C 1 creek, and you have to get official permission to pull a natural object out of a Class C 1 creek.” That's what the law required. So, it took them ten days and twelve thousand dollars in legal fees to do what was obvious, which was to pull this tree out of the creek.

Earlier this year, COVID-19 was first recognized in this country. It happened that there was a flu study ongoing, and the public health researcher had taken swabs from many people. They could have tested those to see what the penetration of the COVID-19 was in mid-January to slow its progression into this country, but they weren't allowed to until they got permission from several agencies in Washington—for example, to certify the lab, even though the lab was already certified for this other flu study. So, they had to wait weeks, at which point, the virus had spread. All because the researchers in Seattle didn't have the authority to make the obvious decision.

Ongoing on the West Coast in the US are these terrible forest fires. They have burned four million acres. For years, the forest rangers and other fire control officials have been saying that we need to build fire breaks, which are controlled burns where you burn areas so that if a fire starts, it will be contained by the fire break and won't keep going for miles. The problem is, to build a fire break in the U.S., you have to go through an environmental review process. That allows, among other things, the neighbors to complain and sue if they don't like it, and nobody likes to have a fire, even a controlled fire in their neighborhood. Almost none of the fire breaks have been built, and we now have catastrophic fires because we couldn't do what the experts thought was sensible, which was to build fire breaks, because of the way the law worked. Political scientist Francis Fukuyama at Stanford has said we've created a modern government that is a “vetoocracy.” Anyone can veto anything. That's why fires are, literally and legally, out of control.

My final story: tens of thousands of people took to the streets this year, with all kinds of violence and a number of deaths, after the eight-minute video of a policeman succumbing and killing a man named George Floyd. It turns out that the policeman who did that had a checkered record, it was evident he was not the sort of person who ought to be on the streets with a loaded gun. He had a bad record, but no one in the police department had the authority to dismiss him be-
because of the way the union contracts have been written in this country. It's almost impossible to get rid of anybody in government, no matter how bad they are. Whether it's a teacher, a cop, or others, we have the people who are supposedly managing the public sector that lack the authority to make the judgments about who should be on the street with a loaded gun or not. As a result, we had this killing, and mass unrest in the country. It all comes down to an inability to manage the police.

Most experts blame social dysfunction on the polarization of politics. Society is now just too divided, we can't get along, that's why there's so much unrest. I think that's backward. In my view the polarization comes from the paralysis, not the other way around. People tend to point fingers and make extreme arguments when they can't get anything done. When they are able to decisions, they roll up their sleeves and get together to get it done. Evidence of that is in 2009, the so-called great recession after the mortgage crisis in the U.S. President Obama was newly in office, and Congress allocated over 800 billion dollars to stimulate the economy. Much of this money was supposed to be spent on rebuilding America's decrepit infrastructure, which had gotten a D-plus rating from the Engineering Association. So, you had a situation where everyone agreed to rebuild infrastructure. The money was allocated, it was right there in the bank. They were ready to spend the money, everybody agreed on what it should be spent on. Five years later, there was a report and buried in a footnote was the fact that a total of 3.6% of that money got spent on transportation infrastructure.

Why is it that even when everybody wants to do something, and they're ready to go, the President of the United State, duly elected by a majority of citizens, can't get it done? That's because the process for permitting is so onerous that, as Obama put it, "there's no such thing as a shovel-ready project." It takes upwards of 10 years to get a permit to go through the process because anybody might complain. I've written a lot about this, and so I'm very involved in the effort to try to rebuild infrastructure. It's another example of paralysis in the system where even high-ranking officials, even the president with approvals, with the money, lack the authority to do the job. The reason none of these things happen sensibly is the people supposedly in charge were powerless to take responsibility.

How did we come this situation of public paralysis? We rebuilt our operating systems in the U.S. after the 1960s on the explicit premise of trying to guarantee against public mistakes by creating detailed codes and processes that tell people exactly how to do things. There will never again be bad values or bad judgment if we have thousand-page rule books to tell people exactly how to do things. If there's going to be a process, we have a process, like an infrastructure permitting, that lets anybody who doesn't like it bring a lawsuit and hold it up for years.

The problem with this system, aimed at avoiding mistakes, is that we make it impossible for people to get things done. We institutionalized a form of central planning.

Its micromanagement expands exponentially. It's worse than central planning, because the planners are dead, so they don't even get together every five years and change the rules. Somebody writes a rule in 1983, retires in 1993, and here it is 2020, and the rule is still pushing people around and telling them they can't take a tree out of a creek. This is not a problem of the goals of the government. It's not a question of whether a liberal or conservative government. It's a problem with the operating system: how do you make things work when no one on the ground has authority to make decisions? It's the same flaw identified by Friedrich Hayek when he was criticizing central planning. People no longer have the opportunity to account for the circumstances of time and place.

The complex shapes of life never end up fitting the square legal holes. People try to make something happen when the rules don't fit the circumstances before them. It's dehumanizing in several ways. First of all, it doesn't honor people's judgment, their sense of right and wrong. Secondly, if you give people too many external criteria that they can't internalize, the effect is to overload the conscious part of the brain and make it freeze. People go brain-dead and burn out because their brain is exhausted trying to keep it all straight. They can no longer access the smart part of the brain, the subconscious, known as long-term memory.

Here's a story recounted by a scholar of bureaucratic behavior named William Simon at Columbia Law School. There was a researcher in a welfare office in Boston, and a young immigrant mother came in looking to restore welfare benefits for her four children. She put the application in too late for one of the children, and she needed to go to the office and fix that. She had just come to this country, didn't have a job, needed the welfare to survive. The clerk at the desk said, “well, I'm sorry, you filed too late” and the woman said, “yes, I know, but all the other criteria are met, they're in school, it's clear I have the children”. The clerk replied, “no I can't you're too late,” and “there is nothing I can do.” The woman left the office in tears. So, the researcher was sitting there, and he went and looked into it. It turned out what the clerk meant was that's here's nothing that the clerk could do, but the person in the next office had the authority to waive the late filing. But the clerk wasn't thinking that way—probably not because she was a bad person, but because her mind was completely overwhelmed by these external criteria that had nothing to do with right and wrong. We've created this caste of people who are trained not to be responsible, but to comply. It's profoundly alienating.

There's an epidemic of burnout in American schools by teachers, doctors, and others who deal with the public because...
they’re exhausted trying to keep all the bureaucratic and legal requirements straight—as opposed to being energized by drawing on their instincts of right and wrong.

How do you fix this? The parties in the U.S. aren’t even talking about this epidemic of powerlessness. The reality is you can’t repair it—at least not without changing the legal framework. Nor can we elect a leader who can lead us out of it because they too are tangled up by all this law. We have to change the framework. Find any successful large organization, and you will see that it is not rule-bound but leaves ample room at the point of implementation for people to take responsibility.

So, what does a functioning government framework look like? An example comes from Australia in the 1980s, Australia had terrible nursing homes, which were regulated with a thousand-page rule book telling people how many peas to put on the plate and trying to make everything uniform. Someone had the bright idea of just throwing away the rule book and replacing it with 31 general principles - have a home-like setting, respect the dignity of the residents, things like that. The officials didn’t lose their authority they had in some ways more authority because they got to interpret how to apply the 31 principles. The experts scoffed, they said nursing home operators were going to get away with murder, etc. They went in a year later, and it turned out the nursing homes were almost twice as good. The reason is that people started going to work focusing on what the residents needed, not on compliance with the rule book. All of a sudden, all that human energy went into making things better for the people.

There was plenty of room for disagreement, but now the disagreements were over right and wrong—for example, what would be better as “a home-like setting.”

People would sit down, and --because everyone’s at risk for the reasonableness of their positions in a principle-based framework--the uncertainty brings people together. They need to work it out because if they take an unreasonable position, they might not win in the event it goes all the way up to a court. The vagueness of principles has virtues. People come together, and they discuss what a homelike setting should be. Nursing homes are allowed to innovate. One nursing home might focus on gardening, and another one might focus on some other activity that the residents like. You had this outpouring of sort of human energy towards constructive purposes, instead of the negative energy of trying to avoid getting a ticket for non-compliance with some regulatory foot-fault.

The challenge here is not designing the new system. It’s easy to design a goal-based system because people don’t generally disagree on the goals. They want a nursing home to have a home-like environment that respects the dignity of the resi-

Continued on page 16
World Information Transfer
World Ecology Report

World Information Transfer, Inc. (ISSN #1080-3092)
475 Park Avenue South, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10016
TELEPHONE: (212) 686-1996
E-MAIL: wit@worldinfo.org
ELECTRONIC EDITION AVAILABLE http://www.worldinfo.org

FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Dr. Christine K. Durbak
MANAGING EDITORS: Fred Yongsibi, Ariel Granat
TRANSLATIONS: Chinese: Josh Lau
Korean: Sehee Oh
Ukrainian: Yaraslaw Tabinsky

REGIONAL DIRECTORS:
CANADA: Taras Boychuk
625 The West Mall, ap 203
Etobicoke ON, M9C 4W9. Canada
Cell: (647) 781-3179
webforge@gmail.com

CHINA: Tracy Lau, Samantha Kong
3 Hop Yat Road 4th Floor,
Kowloon, Hong Kong, China
Tracy916_lau@yahoo.com.hk

EUROPEAN UNION: Dr. Michel Loots
Oosterveldlaan 196
B-2610 Antwerp, Belgium
Tel. 32-3-448-05-54; Fax: 32-3-449-75-74
E-Mail: mloots@humaninfo.org

LEBANON: Suzi Hallak
suzi.hallak@gmail.com

SOUTH KOREA: Sehee Oh
Seo-gu, Incheon, Republic of Korea
sehee109@gmail.com

UKRAINE: Prof. Stefan Heryliv
e-mail: stefko054@gmail.com
Prof. Anna Kapustian
e-mail: stk.history@gmail.com
Kateryna Pavlova
e-mail: pavlovadav@gmail.com
Prof. Yaraslaw Tabinsky
e-mail: yarkoslav@hmail.com

USA: Ariel Granat
475 Park Avenue South, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel: 212-686-1996

World Information Transfer is a Non-Profit, 501(c)(3), Non-Governmental Organization in General Consultative Status with the United Nations, promoting Health and Environmental Literacy.

Board of Directors:
Dr. Christine K. Durbak, CHAIR & CEO
Roland DeSilva
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIR
Dr. Claudia Strauss
VICE CHAIR
Apuv Gupta
SECRETARY
Arnaud LaFleche
TREASURER
Farri Gaba
YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE
Mariam Azarm
Hon. Carolyn T. Comitta
Gary Granat
Dr. Bernard D. Goldstein
Dr. Brian Landzberg
Dr. Patricia Myskowski
Dr. Scott Ratzan
Dr. Mark Robson
Dr. William N. Rom
Amb. Yuriy Sergeyev
Richard Whiteford

Administrator
Fred Yongsibi

“We have not inherited the world from our forefathers... we have borrowed it from our children”
KASHMIRI PROVERB

World Information Transfer Mission Statement

World Information Transfer, Inc. (WIT) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization in General Consultative Status with the United Nations, promoting environmental health and literacy. In 1987, inspired by the Chernobyl (Ukrainian spelling) nuclear tragedy, in Ukraine, WIT was formed in recognition of the pressing need to provide accurate actionable information about our deteriorating global environment and its effect on human health. WIT exercises its mandate through:

- **World Ecology Report (WER).** Published since 1989, the World Ecology Report is a quarterly digest of critical issues in health and environment, produced in four languages and distributed to thousands of citizens throughout the developed and developing world.

- **Health and Environment Conferences:** Since 1992, WIT convenes annual conferences, held at United Nations headquarters on the growing clinical evidence supporting the link between environmental degradation and its effect on human health. The Conferences have been co-sponsored by UN member states and its agencies.

- **Internship:** World Information Transfer (WIT) offers internships at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. Our goal is to assist future leaders understand what the world needs to be sustainable, and to learn about issues in health and environment. Our interns spend the majority of their time following the United Nations agenda. There are 3 sessions, spring, winter and summer - all require applications.

- **Humanitarian Aid:** In conjunction with the K.Kovshevych Foundation, WIT provides humanitarian aid to schools, and orphanages in areas devastated by environmental degradation.

- **Scholarship Program:** WIT assists the K.Kovshevych Foundation, in finding intellectually gifted university students in need of financial assistance to continue their studies in areas related to health and environment.

- **www.worldinfo.org** WIT provides, through its website, scientific presentations from our annual conferences held at the United Nations, the archived World Ecology Reports, Speakers Series and Virtual Voices.

---

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has"
MARGARET MEAD

“Every student needs someone who says, “You mean something. You count.””
-Tony Kushner, playwright (b. 16 Jul 1956)
The problem is not designing a new system. The challenge is figuring out how to walk away from the current system. We have this huge bureaucratic edifice built up, and government capitols around the world are filled with people whose job it is to interpret and enforce all these rules. That’s what most people in government do. Giving up this system and replacing it with one based on human responsibility and accountability will be terrifying to them.

The first step towards change is to create a new public narrative. Instead of arguing about deregulation vs more government, we need a new narrative about making things work again. Once we’ve built public demand for a practical vision of how to run government, a political leader will have the political cover to go out and argue for this common sense vision.

The need to reboot public operating systems has to be part of the political narrative. This requires building a coalition of credible experts and leading citizens behind this new vision. The non-profit Common Good (Commongood.org) has started a Campaign for Common Good aimed at organizing this coalition. We launched it this summer with a petition calling for spring cleaning commissions— to clean out legacy bureaucracies to make them work better. The petition was signed by a hundred leading citizens—including former senators and governors from both parties, people like Bill Bradley, Mitch Daniels, university presidents, leading experts in healthcare, psychology, education, and so forth. Our Campaign proposes seven principles that we have to honor in rebuilding government. There are just seven of them. The first one is “Govern for goals,” and the seventh is to “Restore the moral basis of public choices” -- We need to debate public choices as matters of right and wrong. We have these seven principles, and we’re in the middle of rolling out a 16-plank platform about what it would look like to remake the schools on these principles, to remake the health care system, and to make public service work again on these principles. Our first goal is to bring people together to begin to have this discussion, and we’re hosting forums with leading experts in each area. We have leading think tanks on board, and they’re involved in the discussion.

The problems are shared in many countries around the world. At the bottom, most people don’t want to have civil war over values, or anything else. Most people just want things to work. Nor do people need to win every argument, but they need their views at least to be respected and heard.

The idea of human agency is a core human need. People need to wake up in the morning and feel they can make a difference. It’s their ideas, it’s their willpower, it’s their hard work, their discipline to make a difference. This is not only true for people in private life, but it’s true also for government officials. Moreover, if the government official doesn’t have the authority to be sensible, then neither do you. What good are the parents’ ideas or the teachers’ ideas if the principal of a school doesn’t have authority to make changes? Hannah Arendt talked about this. Authority is a concentric idea. It’s no coincidence, Arendt observed, that the loss of authority and the decline of freedom have occurred simultaneously.

We need to go back to a framework of principles and goals where everyone has authority— not to do whatever they want, but to take responsibility. We need to re-empower people to make a difference, and we empower other people to hold them accountable. It’s a big shift, but we’re overdue.

Things are changing in the 21st century, but how are they going to change? The narrative I see from both sides is unconstructive and often terrifying. Our goal is to create a narrative around a human responsibility vision that we think would bring more people together. Only then can we address the many challenges of this century. Today we’re getting almost nowhere because we’re too busy fighting with each other.