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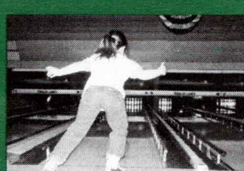
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The Wait Is Over

Horst Köhler selected for Managing Director post

On March 23, the Executive Board unanimously agreed to appoint as Managing Director Horst Köhler, a German national. Köhler is currently President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a position he has held since September 1998.

It wasn't easy getting to this point. Caio Koch-Weiser, the first candidate nominated by the European Union, withdrew from the race in March after a straw poll indicated he did not have the full support of the Executive Board. Stanley Fischer, Acting Managing Director, and Eisuke Sakakibara of Keio University in Japan were both nominated on February 22 and were also candidates in that poll. Sakakibara's nomination was withdrawn on March 14, the same day that Köhler's nomination was received, and Fischer's nomination was withdrawn two days later. As Managing Director, maybe Köhler will want to do something about the selection process. At a press conference on March 17, Köhler said that he had "no hesitation in saying that [the process] should be reviewed and improved."

Our new Managing Director brings a range of international experience to the job. The 57-year-old Köhler was Germany's Deputy Minister of Finance during 1990–93; in that post, he led negotiations on Germany's behalf on the agreement that became the Maastricht Treaty on European Economic Union, and he is also credited with helping unify east and west Germany. He was also Deputy Governor for Germany at the World Bank and personal "sherpa" of the Federal Chancellor in the preparation of G-7 economic summits in Houston (1990), London (1991), Munich (1992), and Tokyo (1993). Between 1976 and 1989, he held various positions in Germany's ministries of economics and finance and was President of the German Savings Bank Association from 1993 to 1998. He is married to Eva Köhler and has two children.

Horst Köhler will start work at the Fund at the beginning of May. That should give us enough time to find the umlaut key on our keyboards.... ◆

At the Vietnam resident representative's office (l-r): Nguyen Thi Van Ahn, Elisabeth Baker, Nguyen Dahn Hao, and Ha Thi Kum Nga.

The Traveling Trainers

For too long, administrative staff in IMF resident representative offices have been left by the roadside while administrative and technological change have roared ahead at headquarters. In a recent survey of resident representatives, HRD found that many administrative staff in field offices lack training. So HRD decided to train them, and who better to do so than experienced assistants from headquarters? A TAP, advertised last April, provided a unique opportunity for a couple of intrepid souls willing to leave their life in Washington behind for six months and bring their experience to their colleagues abroad. Elisabeth Baker (EU2) and Martha Silva de Berta (BLS) were chosen for the job, and they discuss the challenges and rewards of their assignment.

Elisabeth Baker

I was very interested when the TAPs were advertised—this was a chance to make a difference. I could not believe my ears that Monday morning when I was told I had been chosen. For once, I was speechless.

Four weeks. That's what we had to set up a core instruction program, prepare questionnaires to get information on how the offices were set up and what training was needed, contact the resident representative offices to discuss our travel dates, and make our travel plans. B.R.H.S. Rajcoomar, our supervisor and the project initiator, set out general guidelines and left it to us to develop a professional training curriculum and organize our assignments. Training requests came in quickly, requiring us to juggle many requests for the same period. Area department and technical assistance missions loomed in some countries, so training had to be arranged around this work. BTS and HRD's Technical Assistance and Training units strongly supported us, offering instruction whenever we needed it and giving us information until our heads hurt, to make sure we left with the tools to accomplish the job. The security office briefed us on safety issues. Empowered with all this knowledge and technical know-how, Martha and I packed our bags, entrusted our pets to relatives, and flew off on our assignments.

While I expected to be welcomed at each post, I did not anticipate such warm hospitality. Whether in Djibouti or Vietnam, Singapore or Bolivia, training for local staff was long overdue. Many did not understand the Fund's role and mission, even after many years of service, and knew only how their duties fit into their own unit. My job was not only to introduce certain Fund standards and procedures into their work but also to make them aware of the importance of their role and help them interact more effectively with other staff. I trained the staff in Fund-customized software and on how to use the Intranet and Internet, Excel, and PowerPoint. I helped revise office systems, including the most disliked and disregarded—the filing! I got my hands dirty and shared laughter on many occasions.

The experience has given me a lot of respect for the work of our overseas colleagues. I do not think we, at headquarters, always realize the demands on staff in remote offices. The infrastructure cannot always support the same efficiency and tempo as in Washington, and working conditions are not always ideal.

We have received excellent feedback on this program from the resident representatives' assistants. The travel was fun—bouncing about from one airport to

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another, forgetting the time, being stranded at various points, and flying from the bitter cold of Mongolia to the welcome heat of Singapore. I am grateful to my new friends who made me try every dish on their menus, fed me pills to cure my flu, and gave me rides to work on their motorcycles. I am grateful to the resident representatives for their support. And I would like to thank all the staff I trained for their eagerness to learn.

Martha Silva de Berta

I became interested in training when I co-facilitated several courses for HQ assistants. After working in an area department for 15 years, this challenge introduced me to a new area of work that served me well while training staff in resident representative offices.

Elisabeth and I moved to HRD in August 1999. First, we contacted those resident representatives interested in our training and decided which one of us would visit each country. I was to go to Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, and Sri Lanka, and Elisabeth would travel to Brazil, Bolivia, Djibouti, Indonesia, Korea, Mongolia, the Singapore Institute, Tanzania, and Vietnam. We made all our arrangements with the help of B.R.H.S. Rajcoomar and Praveen Sewpaul. We were also aided by the Technical Assistance Unit of Staff Benefits for information on resident representative offices, BTS for our technology needs, HRD's Training Section, and EXR for videos and other essential information. We started our first mission the third week of August and visited two or three posts at a time for four-and-a-half weeks each, with a ten-day stay at headquarters between missions. Jumping from one country to another, sometimes arriving at odd hours or being ready to train immediately, was a challenge and an excellent test of the good will and the much-needed resilience some of us develop while working at the Fund. Ronald Hicks, res rep in Bangladesh, explains, "Martha's visit was complicated by a three-day national strike, but she adjusted the program accordingly, including extending her time here, with ease and good grace. We really appreciated her flexibility and good spirit."

All the staff I worked with, from administrative and research assistants to economists, were hungry for information about the Fund's mission. I presented information on the structure and functions of the Fund, the structure of their counterpart department, the review process, the flow process in the preparation of documents from the time a mission is requested to the time of the Board discussion, and approval and issuance of a PIN. Roger Nord, res rep in Central Europe says, "Martha visited both my Budapest and Prague offices and provided valuable support to my local staff. She conveyed an excellent picture of how all the disparate pieces fit together, and she helped reorganize the office."

I also trained them on budget overview using Excel, Word tips and tricks, PowerPoint, Internet searching techniques, Jolis, Fund standards and procedures, and document management, as well as protocol and other useful office practices.

It was an enormous professional challenge and a heavy responsibility and a great way to test my knowledge and to learn more about the Fund's activities in the field. Most important, I helped them feel less isolated and gave them knowledge to help them do their jobs more effectively. The staff I worked with were amazingly adept at overcoming difficulties while carrying out their duties. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to see the difficulties some people encounter and the spirit with which they carry on, more often than not with a smile.

The Fund has about 70 posts, and this pilot project covered only 18. There is more to be done, and we hope that management will continue to provide its support to this much-needed training. ◆

Elisabeth Baker and Martha Silva de Berta

On assignment in Kazakhstan (l-r): resident representative Paul Ross, Martha Silva de Berta, Olga Bissekeeva, and Galeeya Sutzhanova.

From Souk to Internet

Two Fund Staff compete in the World Bank's Development Marketplace

The World Bank's second annual Development Marketplace was a resounding success, and two Fund staff were among the lucky finalists in its Innovation Competition. Lina Annab (EU1) and Frank Havlicek (HRD) were among the 300 selected from over 1,100 project entries submitted by development-minded people from the Bank and other international organizations, academics, NGOs, foundations, private industry, and governments in about 60 countries worldwide. The Development Marketplace, according to its website (www.developmentmarketplace.org), is a forum for members of the development community to come together and pool their creativity to form partnerships to fight poverty. Lina's idea, Civility through Mobility, was to establish a workshop in Bethlehem, the West Bank, to teach people to build lightweight and low-cost wheelchairs at the Artificial Limbs Factory in Bethlehem, with technical assistance from the Whirlwind Wheelchair International project at San Francisco State University. Frank's project, World Development Television, WDTV, is to develop a "virtual network" using the Internet, CD-ROM, satellite, and traditional broadcast arrangements to create a global distribution system for programs about poverty reduction and development.

For Lina and Frank, preparations for the competition began last fall when they saw flyers announcing that short development proposals for the Development Marketplace were due in November. The organizers were looking for projects that contributed to poverty reduction in a given country, were innovative in the sense that they hadn't been done—or done in that way—before, and were sustainable. Frank and Lina were notified in December that they were finalists, and the exhibits had to be ready on February 8–9 for the competition. "The competition," Frank explains, "was a world's fair of development ideas. It looked a little like a science fair—each group had about a five-foot square space to set its project up. It was a great intellectual and professional challenge, one I hope more IMF staff members take up next time."

Their motivation

Lina has been thinking about doing more to help people with disabilities for a long time. She is from the West Bank and has been volunteering with the Artificial Limb Factory run by the Handicrafts Workshop Society for Girls for years. "I really believe in what they do. They are constantly trying to expand the services they offer to women, particularly women with disabilities, in the West Bank, and I wanted to contribute more," she says.

Frank, a former NBC-TV and *Washington Post* executive who teaches political science at American University, didn't really start thinking seriously about WDTV until the competition came along, although the idea for it came about when he met several months earlier with people at the World Bank Institute, a group that does videoconferencing for training purposes. "What was astounding to me," Frank explains, "was that no one is already doing something similar to World Development Television to distribute educational and interactive programs on development throughout the world." The Bank, through its Global Links program, makes several videos a year on thematic issues such as corruption, and they are very elaborate and expensive. "Frances Hardin in EXR at the Fund also produces very good documentary videos," Frank adds, saying, "The problem is that there is no global distribution system for these and the tons of other programs being made by producers in third-world countries and elsewhere. My idea was to create a dozen programs with an anchored format and introductions on the general region or subject, then use segments of programs from a variety of sources—and to use these programs to develop a network of widespread distribution arrangements." While most of his programming ideas aren't new, Frank explains that he has an idea to make pro-

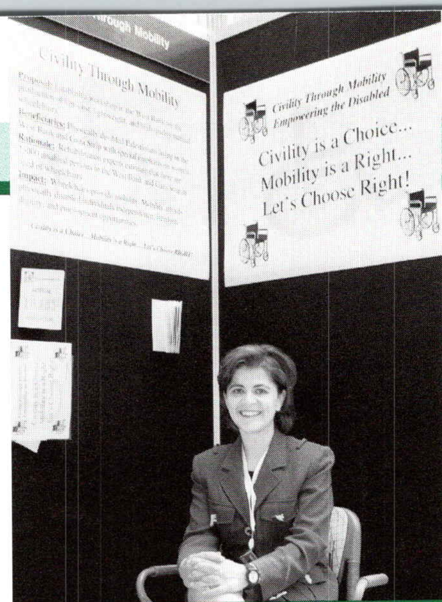
Messrs. Wolfensohn and Camdessus learn about WDTV from Frank.

grams with children from all over the world talking about health, education, and development-related issues, which hasn't, he thinks, been done regularly.

Partnerships

The marketplace encouraged participants to partner with outside sources as well as with units in the Bank for resources and a "reality check," Frank says. One of his partners is Shandwick International, a U.K.-based public affairs and communications company operating in 56 countries. Shandwick's involvement, Frank explains, "is to develop commercial sponsorship for the distribution network. Shandwick represents companies that have global brands and would have an interest. It would be inexpensive PBS-type advertising for sponsors." The World Bank Institute, including the global links documentary unit and the distance learning videoconferencing unit, also were partners on Frank's project, as well as Issues and Images Television Trust, a DC-based, nonprofit TV production company.

Lina's long experience with the Artificial Limbs Factory and their hope to use the technology developed at Wheelwind Wheelchair International made them natural partners for her project. Ralf Hotchkiss, recipient of the 1989 McArthur "Genius" award and the director of the project at San Francisco State University, patented a method for building low-cost wheelchairs using material available all over the world. "I met with Ralf several years ago about introducing his method in the West Bank, and we have been talking about it ever since," Lina says. Because of their cost, wheelchairs are a luxury in much of the world where wheelchairs are often donated via ad hoc arrangements that can stop any time. Also, Lina says, "wheelchairs are bound to break down, and replacement parts are often expensive. The wheelchairs we want to produce are of better quality and less expensive than commercially available ones and can be ridden over unpaved roads. Also, the workshops we want to set up would be staffed with people with disabilities who really know the needs of the users and would adapt their wheelchairs to the individual users."



Lina shows off her project.

Timing

The timing, Lina says, "is also very good. The situation in the West Bank is ideal for my project because the transition to the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] is taking place, which means that some of the services offered to the disabled may be more formalized. And, in October 1999, the Disability Law was passed, offering a lot of hope to people with disabilities. In the West Bank, the community-based institutions are providing the PNA with input and experience from years of working in the field, and the PNA is using this information to formulate policy. My project would complement the PNA's work."

Frank's project is well suited to the times also. "There is a lot of good material out there, much of it from producers in developing countries who have no way of getting their programs distributed, except on an ad hoc basis," Frank says. "There is also growing demand for programming and so much relatively inexpensive technology available now for distribution—including videoconferencing, video streaming, webcasting, CD-ROM, and even satellite."

What now?

The Bank funded 44 of the projects presented at the marketplace, for a total of $5 million. While Frank and Lina's projects weren't chosen for funding, that hasn't stopped them. Frank has a stack of business cards from people throughout the world interested in WDTV. "As a result of the Marketplace," he says, "I have been invited to present WDTV at the Stockholm Challenge Awards this spring for projects on new uses of information technology for global knowledge development." Lina is happy that "the word is out. The marketplace was a great forum, and I was approached by a group that might be interested in sponsoring the idea." Frank and Lina agree that their experience was very positive, and Lina says it best, "I am ecstatic about this whole thing because it is something that I have always wanted to do, and I am very hopeful." ◆

Being in Two Places at Once

Roger Nord has been the regional representative in Central Europe, where he covers the Czech Republic and Hungary, for just over a year now. He discusses his position and its benefits for the Fund.

"I spend a great deal of time with journalists in both countries discussing the IMF's work because we are under fire from all sorts of groups."

Why was this regional representative post created?

The Fund has had an office in Budapest since 1990, and in Prague we closed the res rep office in the mid-1990s. When the financial program with Hungary expired, the question was, "Do we close the office or change its orientation?" So the European I Department hired me in January 1999 to be responsible for Hungary and the Czech Republic, with the possibility of covering other countries later, such as the Slovak Republic, if it is deemed useful.

The decisive argument was the economies of scale the Fund gained in putting these countries under one res rep. The Czech Republic and Hungary are advanced transition economies that came out of state planning ten years ago.They are now widely regarded as emerging market economies, with all the opportunities and risks that this entails. As the financial market crises of the 1990s showed, IMF surveillance is especially important in economies that are subject to severe swings in capital flows. At the same time, these countries have made tremendous progress toward becoming market economies and, in many ways, are already much like Western Europe. They want to join the European Union and are first-wave countries when the EU expands. They are members of the OECD and just joined NATO. While they are unlikely to need Fund resources in the short term, we have an intense dialogue with them. There are many new issues for them, including those relating to EU accession, which is an opportunity that also poses problems. For example, a country that joins the EU will eventually join the euro area, and that has implications for the exchange rate regime today. Joining the EU also requires many changes in a country's laws and regulations, which has an impact on government spending and, hence, on fiscal policy.

How would you compare your assignment to that of a res rep covering a single country?

Most res reps are posted in countries that have Fund programs, so their role is primarily program monitoring and implementation. I was a res rep in Nepal 10 years ago. The role of the res rep in program countries is quite clear—he/she is the liaison between the Fund and the authorities on a daily basis, helps the authorities implement policies they have committed to, and ensures that we know whether they are living up to their commitments. There are other aspects to the job, and the res rep review done by Mr. Brau's office two years ago emphasized them. It is important to work on institutional development, technical assistance, and with the media, but it is inevitable that the res rep will be devoting the bulk of his/her time to program issues.

The Fund has a few other res reps in countries that do not have programs, and in those surveillance countries the role of the res rep is different and media relations are much more important. We preach transparency for others, so I feel we should be transparent ourselves. I spend a great deal of time with journalists in both countries discussing the IMF's work because we are under fire from all sorts of groups. In Central Europe, people were keen to know what the Fund position was on the danger of contagion stemming from the Russian crisis and what lessons we drew from the Asian crisis. It was a useful opportunity for me because I had been involved with many of the Asian crisis issues—I was in PDR immediately before starting this position, and we were drawing the lessons from that and working on the proposals for a new financial architecture. So I am very familiar with new Fund initiatives on transparency, standards, and financial sector assessment programs, and these are all the things that we are doing in these countries.

The Czech Republic is admirably transparent—it released the mission's concluding statement soon after we finished discussing it, and it was one of the first countries that did a report on the observance of standards and codes. Since I have been in Hungary, the authorities have released their first PIN, and we are now working on a financial sector assessment program. So all of these new Fund initiatives are very relevant for these countries.

For the Fund, it is a new way of looking at a res rep. The Brau report stated the need for the Fund to look at res reps in a different way—as people who represent the Fund, rather than solely a mission member in the field. To do that, a res rep needs to be aware of and publicize what the Fund is doing in all areas. I write op ed articles in newspapers in both countries and go on TV to discuss the Fund's work. That can only be good, because sometimes the bad press we get is due to a lack of information about what we are up to or fears about globalization and our role in it.

The regional aspect of my job includes my traveling to Brussels occasionally, such as when the Fund was invited to express its views on the European Commission's reports on the candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, and participating in regional press seminars, such as the one organized by EXR in Bulgaria where I spoke to journalists there from all over Central and Eastern Europe. I also go to the Joint Vienna Institute and participate in seminars—for instance for members of parliament from Central and Eastern Europe and speak about the Hungarian success story or challenges that the Czech Republic is facing now and what conclusions can be drawn for other less-advanced transition economies.

How do you think the preparations for the Prague Annual Meetings are progressing?

Shailendra Anjaria was in Prague recently, and we toured the agencies responsible for organizing the meetings. It is fair to say that after some initial lags, they are now pretty much on track in terms of the technical arrangements. The Czech authorities have security concerns because of Seattle, and their police have been collaborating with authorities and police in Washington to learn lessons from Seattle and will observe the spring meetings and how the local authorities deal with them. The Annual Meetings are another opportunity for us to publicize what we are doing. The Bank has a regional office in Budapest, and my counterpart in the Bank and I participate in panels on issues pertinent to the Annual Meetings.

Have you noticed results from your efforts to be open with the press?

Definitely in the Czech Republic, where the press is more diverse and more internationally oriented than the Hungarian press. It may also be a result of the economy in the Czech Republic being in worse shape—when an economy is not doing well, the views of the IMF have somewhat higher currency, so I am often asked about the current economic situation there. Hungary has been growing at nearly 5 percent for the past four years, and so there is less demand for views from the IMF on the economy, but there I have had interviews on issues such as why the U.S. expansion is lasting so long and what are the lessons from the Asian crisis.

Do you think other positions of this type would be useful for the Fund?

It will need to be decided this year whether my position is a good model for the Fund, because there are resource constraints, and the costs and benefits need to be weighed. Personally, I think that this regional post—certainly during this period leading up to EU accession—has been very beneficial. It has also resulted in some savings, because I write some reports in the field, which

"I think that this regional post—certainly during the period leading up to EU accession—has been very beneficial."

decreases the number of missions. For the Fund, making full use of its field staff will reduce travel costs as well as reduce pressure and stress on staff at headquarters.

How has your family adjusted?

Despite our living in Budapest and my traveling back and forth to Prague every other week for a few days, they like it a lot. Budapest is a very international city, and there is a great deal going on. The children are at an international school that is similar to the school they attended in Washington, so the change wasn't very abrupt. My wife, a lawyer, is interested in the legal issues of the transition from communism, such as press freedom, and is working on a paper about human rights. For me, it is nice to be back in Europe where I am from originally. My mother, who is now 80, lives in the Netherlands, so it is easy for us to see each other. Being back in Europe at this juncture in these countries that are trying so hard—and I think successfully—to fully integrate with the European Union is very exciting.

How do you find shuttling back and forth every couple of weeks?

The travel is a bit more intense than I expected for two reasons. First, since we didn't have an office in the Czech Republic, I had to spend more time there at first to establish contacts. I can do more by phone now since I know people. I also had to spend more time there because the economy has been a lot weaker, so there has been more demand for the Fund's views and advice. But, because the cities are close together and the transport links are good, shuttling hasn't been a problem most of the time, except during the Kosovo crisis, when air space was rather tight in the region. In addition, I have recently been authorized to rent an apartment in Prague, which means I will not have to live out of a suitcase as much—and it turns out to be cheaper as well.

Do you feel isolated from the Fund at a remote office?

Technology has allowed me to be much more integrated into the Fund's work than I was ten years ago. I can log on to the network, look at the Fund Intranet, and check my e-mail, which has really made me feel connected to the Fund. Also, when I arrive in the office, it is only 2:30 am in Washington, which always gives me the pleasant feeling of being ahead of the game. ◆

Eliahu Kreis helps local community

Eliahu Kreis, the IMF's resident representative in Bolivia, recently donated between $15,000 and $20,000 to modernize and enlarge a day care center in a poor section of the country. Staff News *talked with him about his generous gift, and he discusses it below.*

How long have you been res rep in Bolivia? Can you tell us a little about your career in the Fund before that?

I have been in the Fund more than 30 years. I was previously a res rep in Bolivia in 1972–73 when I established close relations with General Hugo Banzer, the president (military) at that time, and we kept in touch over the years. In 1978, he decided to return the country to democracy and established his own party, but a military coup prevented this from happening until 1982, when the military handed over the authority to civilian rule because of economic difficulties. Mr. Banzer won two elections—never with a complete majority—but supported other candidates for the presidency in congress. In June 1997, he was finally elected president and requested that I return to Bolivia as a senior res rep. Over the years I have been a res rep in Chile, and I was the senior res rep in Uruguay, 1988–91, and Argentina in 1993–94. In between, I worked for a few years in FAD, where I participated in missions to Israel, my home country, and spent some time doing technical assistance, and was a Deputy Division Chief and Advisor in WHD. I participated in and led a large number of missions to Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina.

How did you get involved in the day care center?

Shortly after starting my current post in Bolivia, my mother passed away in Israel (at the age of 98 years and 6 months), and I thought that a nice memorial for her and my personal contribution to alleviate poverty in Bolivia would be to do something for the younger generation in the country. My mother always talked about the need to contribute to charity, as she was a very religious person. I am sure that if she were alive to


Eliahu Kreis (center with mustache), surrounded by the children he has helped and others.

see the extreme poverty in Bolivia, she would approve of this project. President Banzer's wife, Viola, is in charge of social activities in the country. When I spoke to her about my desire to give something to charity, she suggested the day care center in the city of Alto, close to La Paz (in the district of Amor de Dios) and one of the poorest cities in Bolivia.

Can you tell us a little about the center—what the backgrounds of the women who send their children there are, how large it is, and how many children it can accommodate?

Most of the people living in the area are very poor, and both the fathers and mothers work long hours for little pay. They need a place to leave their children where they can get love, food, and education. A special order of local nuns runs the center, and I was impressed with their commitment to the children. When I first saw the day care center, it was mostly made of adobe and bricks and, at an altitude of almost 4,000 meters, was really cold. Nevertheless, the children there, who range from three months to six years old, were getting a good education and great care. Over the course of about a year, we added a library and a recreation room for infants as well as a covered playground. It is now quite large, with four big rooms, a wooden floor, and accommodation for over 70 children, including 20 babies. A lot of the construction work was done by the parents, and I am still working on improving the place. Two of my friends in La Paz contributed mattresses, blankets, and new clothes, and five people working in my office helped me purchase toys and other educational materials for the center.

What personal stories about your involvement in the center would you like to share?

My main experience throughout this process has been the love of the children in the center and the support and encouragement I got from my family. My daughter e-mailed me almost daily about it. I kid my children that they were really the ones who constructed it, as it came out of their inheritance, but they did not mind at all. On the contrary, my children fully supported it.

Since the center opened, how is it going?

The center is working out great. The 16 cribs I bought are not enough, and I am frequently presented with expansion plans and daily needs such as a water connection, a refrigerator, educational materials, and the like. The Bishop of Alto has already suggested to me indirectly that they would appreciate another day care center in a different area of the city if I have willing friends to finance it or some more resources. I told them that if I have additional resources, I will be more than happy to do so, if, as I hope, my stocks do as well as they did last year. I am sure that there are many Bolivians who have more means than I do and will get involved. Despite the media's praise, some Bolivians resented it, asking what right I, as a foreigner, had to do this, putting the rest of them to shame. But generally it has been well accepted and worth it for me, if only to see the faces of the children when I visit. ◆

Temporary help is just a click away

You never know when you are going to need a temporary assistant. With heavy travel schedules, vacation time, sick leave, maternity leave, and other absences, departments depend more than ever on temporary personnel. The Secretarial Support Group (SSG), the division in HRD that fulfills requests for temporary assistants, is committed to providing the best service it can to IMF departments. The information that departments provide on the temporary request forms is critical because it ensures that the department gets the right person at the right time. That is why Praveen Sewpaul, Human Resources Officer, SSG, enlisted the help of Saeed Akhtar (BTS), Subrato Sensharma (BTS), and Gary Zhu (BTS) to develop an information system to make the process easier. The Temporary Help Information Management and Logistics Support System (TEMPS) was among the first Intranet systems in the Fund. Back when most Web-based systems were displaying static text or retrieving reports, TEMPS enabled users Fundwide to submit requests to SSG. TEMPS is a testament to what can be achieved with true teamwork; its success is attributable to the cooperation of SSG, BTS, and all its users.

Why was TEMPS developed?

These days, SSG fills about 100 or so daily requests for temporary assistants, and about 150 during holidays. Fulfilling these requests requires considerable coordination between SSG, the departments, and temporary agencies. Mary Ann Miles, SSG assistant, explains, "When a department requests a temporary assistant, we need information on the specifics of the job to be done and the length of the assignment, among other things. We also want people who are professional, reliable, and pleasant to work with."

"Until 1997," Praveen explains, "requests for temporary assistance were sent to us by e-mail, and we had to retype that information into a local database." SSG staff had to spend an inordinate amount of their resources retyping the information and preparing reports for departments' budgeting purposes. The process needed to be improved, so the BTS team threw in the life raft.

The initial TEMPS, a Windows-based system, was installed in April 1997 and was used by SSG to maintain user profiles and assign temporary help to departments. "It solved many of our logistical and operational problems," Praveen adds, "but did not go far enough in streamlining and managing daily departmental requests." A Fundwide system was needed, so that departments could enter and manage their own information.

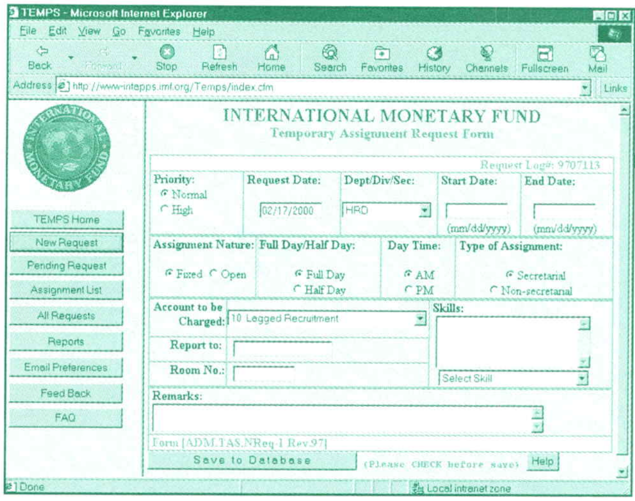
New and improved TEMPS

In late 1997, the expanded version of TEMPS was conceptualized. "We wanted to ensure that besides meeting the operational needs of the SSG staff, the improved system afforded the Fund departments with easy and quick access to their TEMPS information," remarked Saeed. "We had to look carefully at every aspect of the workflow and interactions between SSG and departments, and the BTS team took a real interest in solving our problems," said Praveen. The enhanced system was implemented in three months, and a pilot program was initiated in March 1998 with the participation of BTS, EXR, EU1, MAE, PDR, and TRE. The pilot phase included multiple reviews of the system, training sessions, and system refinements based on the input of pilot departments. TEMPS was made available Fundwide in October 1998. "BTS support was an important component of the rapid implementation," Praveen adds.

Benefits

The current TEMPS offers several advantages over the initial version without more work for users or SSG. For Ollie Goodger (APD), "the system is easy to use," and Lucy Yepez (MAE) agrees. "TEMPS has streamlined our ability to request temporaries. We have cut down on calls to SSG, it is easier to track our requests, and our requests are met without delays," Lucy says.

Departments enter their requests on a simple web-based form. "It certainly has saved us a great deal of time and frustration," Mary Ann explains, "since we don't have to retype all the information." SSG receives a system-generated e-mail whenever a new request is entered into the system, and each request is automatically assigned a log number, which serves as a reference throughout the temporary assignment and evaluation. Each request has all the information necessary to fill an assignment, and, once the temporary is assigned, the program automatically sends an e-mail to the requesting department.



Departments now have better control of their own data. They can modify requests, change budget codes, extend assignments, and generate reports whenever they want. AOs can verify past assignment information about any temporary assistant. "It is a wonderful reporting system and has made the budget reporting system much easier," states Lynn Patton of TRE. The time saved with this new system has enabled SSG to focus on other important issues, including performance evaluations, monitoring agency performance, and recruiting.

Support

"TEMPS was an excellent opportunity for us to use the latest available technology," Gary says. Subrato adds, "We had to streamline this complex flow of work and help users feel at ease with the system." For their part, the users embraced the system with enthusiasm, taking the minor kinks of the initial days in stride.

"For a Fundwide system like this, support is critical," observes Saeed, "and the team prepared for that. Apart from training sessions, we offered extensive online help, FAQs, and regular updates for users." Users have been extremely satisfied with the day-to-day support they receive. "They are always A-1 on responses," says Jan Smart (EXR).

How does it work?

TEMPS is user-friendly. All one has to do is register with SSG, get the site address, log in, and start using it, generally without any training. The request form is intuitive yet formal, and all other features are generally available through a single click. No elaborate navigation is necessary, and users receive easy-to-understand instructions as well as the name of a BCS contact for help if problems arise.

TEMPS is a work in progress. SSG and BTS recently added a performance evaluation form for temporary assistants. Gary explains, "AOs and users from requesting divisions automatically receive e-mail messages with a hyperlink to the evaluation form when an assignment lasts 10 days or longer, and a reminder is sent after 15 days." Departments now have the ability to store all their evaluations in their databases. "Evaluating temporaries through TEMPS greatly reduced the paperwork," adds Subrato. Options to automate several other functions with linkages to TEMPS are also being explored, including features to automate the security pass information, invoice information, and weekly locator sheet.

Success

TEMPS has grown from a two-person system with limited features to a Fundwide system with 120 users. The TEMPS website receives from 2,000 to 4,000 "hits" a month. TEMPS' success is attributable to the teamwork surrounding its development. "AOs, in particular, really cooperated at each stage of evolution, enthusiastically testing the system and contributing thoughtful ideas for enhancements," Subrato explains, adding, "their involvement and critical support made the system easy to introduce Fundwide." Through TEMPS, SSG has demonstrated that a quick turnaround can be achieved even with a large group of diverse users. And for their part, the AOs and the assistants have clearly won the "best users" award. ◆

Praveen Sewpaul

Sir Joseph Gold, who, as the Fund's General Counsel for many years, dominated the legal evolution of the international monetary system, died on February 22 at 87. In a statement to the Executive Board, Acting Managing Director Stanley Fischer paid tribute to Sir Joseph as "this extraordinary man who gave so much to the Fund.... His countless contributions will remain as a lasting memory."

In addition to his services as the principal author of the First and Second Amendments to the Articles, Sir Joseph was a prolific writer on a range of legal issues. He was also a renaissance man with a large library of first editions of modern works of literature and a deep affection for the austere existentalist playwright Samuel Beckett.

A Party with a Purpose


José and Melannie strut their stuff.

The Social Network and Civic & Community Relations have become partners in helping raise funds for needy children worldwide. Children love to laugh and dance and just be themselves, and so do we. On March 3, the group held a lively party and fundraiser for Instituto Mundo Libre, a Peruvian organization that shelters abandoned children.

Over 400 people attended. The red level, usually host to seminars and meetings, was transformed into "Disco IMF." Partygoers, including Luis Sandoval Davila, Consul at the Peruvian Embassy, and many Peruvians from the IMF, World Bank, Organization of American States, Pan-American Health Organization, and InterAmerican Development Bank, danced to the pulsating rhythms of Mobile DJ "WTVV 64." Eight-year-old Melannie Alvarado and her partner José "Chino" Terrones entranced onlookers with their Peruvian dance show. Food, prepared by founders of the Godparents for the Children of Instituto Mundo Libre, disappeared quickly. Three pairs of eyes peered through the darkness and flashing lights, ever watchful that guests were having a good time. Blanca Ochoa, Juanita Roushdy, and Kathy DeBoe who also found time to release stress by dancing to "La Vida Loca."

The IMF Social Network was launched in the fall of 1995 by a group of IMF staff to give staff a chance to intermingle socially. After trying other activities, the Social Network found its niche in fundraising. Two earlier successful events featured the IMF blues band, the Fundamentals, and a Halloween party. Blanca Ochoa, the Social Network's president, has spread awareness of the group.


Partners (l-r): Olga Martin, Blanca Ochoa, Constanza Bryant, Lita Ali, and Juanita Roushdy.

Last September, Juanita Roushdy was appointed to the new Civic & Community Relations office, and since she was new to the job and without immediate resources, she responded to a query about holding a fundraiser in the IMF by suggesting that the staff member contact Blanca, who said the Social Network would be happy to help. In October 1999, Jimi Smooth and his hit-time band headlined at a fundraiser where more

Instituto Mundo Libre

In Peru, children are sometimes abandoned to live in the streets, doomed to delinquency and drug addiction. In 1990, Instituto Mundo Libre was created to provide drug rehabilitation and medical services for these children and to help them get back into society. Children who stay at Mundo Libro—to avoid abusive parents, exploitation, and lack of food—receive counseling, lodging, meals, other basic essentials, and armfuls of love, but are required to live by the house rules, which include daily chores and studies. Mundo Libre, which usually houses about 50 children, relies on private donations.

On January 20, 1997, in Washington, D.C., Godparents for the Children of the Free World Institute was established to support Mundo Libre. Marita Fuller invited a group of concerned citizens to learn more about the institute, telling of her visit to Mundo Libre. Forty "godparents" currently write to and receive letters from the children assigned to them, sending presents at Christmas and on birthdays and holding fundraisers. Many of these godchildren now have excellent grades; sports abilities that have won them trophies; and skills in computers, carpentry, and the arts. They now have a future.

For more information on Instituto Mundo Libre, contact Marita at mfuller@ifc.org or (202) 473-0380.

than 200 guests danced and raised money for orphaned children in Uganda through the "Kids to Kids Foundation." A partnership was born.

All corners of the IMF have joined in the effort. In particular, Kathy DeBoe and Rebecca Kudla of the Hospitality Section (TGS) and Bob Lynagh and the movers (TGS), who put down those state-of-the-art dance floors, really helped make the party a success.

The partnership is planning five more fundraisers this year for overseas nonprofit institutions that help children. Each event will have entertainment and food representing the country and will support a worthy cause.

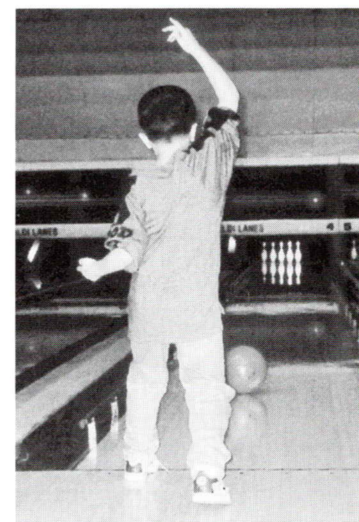
If you know of overseas nonprofits working with children that might be a candidate for one of our fundraisers, e-mail communityrelations@imf.org with information about the organization. If you would like to become a member of the Social Network, e-mail bochoa@imf.org. ◆

Jean Boyd

Involve

A *Bowling Event*. It was one of those beautiful premature spring days in February when most people were outside enjoying the rare sunshine. But a few INVOLVE volunteers were brushing up on their bowling with a group of children from Community Lodgings. After settling into their assigned lanes, everyone went about the task of choosing their "lucky" ball. What made a ball lucky? Nancy, age 6, said that a pink ball would always travel down the middle to knock down lots of pins. Elvis, age 5, said that the more balls he had the better, so he collected five. Wilder, age 4, just wanted a ball that he could lift, and that took some searching. He finally settled for one that he could roll and push. Cindy Bilbray helped the kids pick their lucky balls, while Joan Robertson figured out how to work the computerized scorecard. Des Horton and her sons Phillip and David joined in the fun too.

For the younger children, "bumpers" were put up to prevent the balls from rolling into the gutters without hitting any pins, making the game more enjoyable for the kids and giving Juanita Roushdy and Connie Strayer their highest scores ever. Everyone had their own technique. Nancy took her pink ball and gently rolled it down the alley. It bounced from bumper to bumper, and she racked up several spares this way. Elvis threw his ball down the alley, and it shook the floor as it landed. Young Wilder had the best technique. He pushed his 8-lb. ball down the alley and as it slowly crept toward the pins, he bent down and blew real hard to help it along. He had one of the highest scores, so soon we were all imitating his style. Midway through the second game, volunteers started losing energy, but the kids gleefully continued until it was time to turn in their shoes, bringing to a close another fun adventure for volunteers and kids alike.



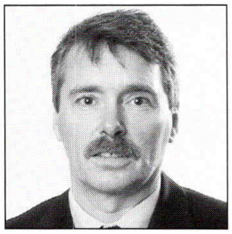
Elvis in a hopeful stance.

Food and Friends. One bright chilly January morning, seven brave INVOLVE volunteers worked with Food and Friends, a group that prepares and delivers food to homebound AIDS patients. Shiela Wright, Alice Lieberman, Lucia Casaravilla, Vilma Pauig, Carmen Romero, and Marie Toralballa joined project leader Roxana Nikdjou to pick up and distribute packaged food around DC. We divided into groups and climbed into our cars with the food. This was a challenging project—next time we will have to use cars that have autopilot. One group got so lost that they stopped at a police station, a church, and a bar to find an address, finally contacting the patient to get there. To keep their spirits up, they bought lottery tickets (but didn't win) and laughed about it. The hardest part wasn't the driving. These patients are entirely dependent on the drivers for their meals, and seeing the condition in which some of them live was quite a shock. Yet the people were cheery and very thankful. Volunteers finished a long morning exhausted, but also uplifted, and looking forward to the next Food and Friends project, which we hope to continue quarterly. ◆

Lucia Casaravilla, Connie Strayer, and Roxana Nikdjou

*new*imfstaff

Johann R. Bjorgvinsson
Icelandic, is a Senior Economist, STA. Formerly an economist at the National Economic Institute of Iceland, he was educated at the University of Iceland, and Uppsala University, Sweden. He lists classical music, traveling, and running among his interests, and is married with three children.



Roberto Cardarelli
Italian, is an Economist, APD. He has a Ph.D. in Economics from Cambridge. He was a researcher at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London, and, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Economic Studies and Analysis in Rome before joining the Fund.

Christian José Carrillo Rodriguez
Ecuadorian, is a Research Assistant, RES. He was previously a sovereign analyst at Donaldson, Lufkin, and Jenrette, International, and holds a B.S. in economics from the London School of Economics. He is interested in quantitative macroeconomics, financial markets, and econometrics. He is married and has a cat.

Pascale De Boeck
Belgian, is a Senior Counsel, LEG. Formerly a Senior Counsel at the World Bank and the Fund, she holds a J.D. from Stetson University, St. Petersburg, Florida, and a license in law from Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels.

Nong Jotikasthira
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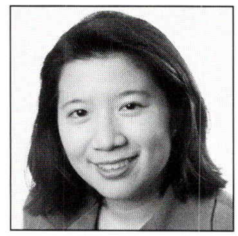
*new*imfstaff

Patricia Mathisen
A U.S. national, is a Human Resources Officer, HRD, in charge of InFFO. Previously a project director for the U.S. Dept. of State, she holds a degree in applied linguistics from the University of New Mexico and is working toward an M.A. at Mary Washington College. She enjoys opera.

Chi Nguyen
Canadian, is a Research Assistant, INS. She was previously a mergers and acquisitions reporter at Dow Jones Newswire. She holds a B.A. in economics from McGill University.



Teresa Dabán Sánchez
Spanish, is an Economist, FAD. She was previously an advisor at the Ministry of Finance, Spain, and holds an M.S. in econometrics and mathematical economics from the London School of Economics and an M.A. in economics and finance from the Centre for Monetary and Financial Studies, Madrid, Spain. She is interested in traveling.

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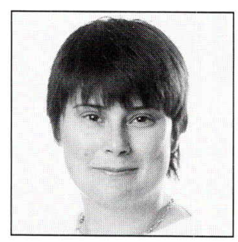
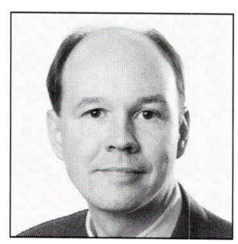
A U.K. national, is a Staff Assistant, TGS. Before joining the Fund staff, she was a contractual staff member in SSG. Educated at De Havilland College, United Kingdom, she enjoys travel, reading, and music.



Mark Zelmer
Canadian, is a Senior Economist, MAE. Before coming to the Fund, he held various positions at the Bank of Canada. He holds an M.S. from the University of British Columbia. He is interested in the interaction between monetary and financial stability. He is also interested in curling, golf, and getting to know Washington and the U.S. He is married.



Dong Zhou
Chinese, is a Computer Systems Officer, TGS. Formerly a contractual computer systems officer in TGS, he holds an M.S. from the Bejing Institute of Technology and an M.E.A. from The George Washington University. He enjoys classical music and Redskins football.

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Guler Fitzgerald

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Margaret J. Earll
Shuja Nawaz
Sanaa Elaroussi

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Elfriede L. Archer
E. Hull Kalantari
Neena Kapur
Philippe Marciniak
Belinda B. Ruch
Alain Coune
A. Mokhtar Kamel
Ruth Lituma
Paul J. McClellan
Norma S. Samson

Separations

Andrew G. Berg
Cindy Taylor McKissock
Maziar Minovi
Slawka I. Pylyshenko
Irmgard G. Svenson
John Richard Hill
Aida E. Merino
Hubert Neiss
Nestor Santiago

Transfers

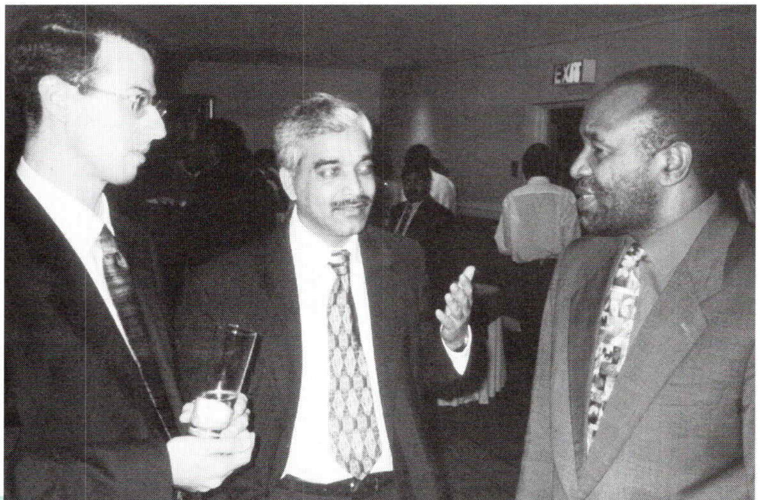
Maha O. Amad to OBP from EU1
David J. Andrews to AFR from PDR
Graciela S. Argerich to FAD from TGS
Craig Beaumont to PDR from EU1
Adam G.G. Bennett to MED from PDR
Francesco Caramazza to AFR from RES
Marta Castello-Branco to EU2 from PDR
Salim Mohsin Darbar to EU1 from AFR
S. Nuri Erbas to MED from INS
Przemyslaw Gajdeczka to PDR from MED
Richardus T. Harmsen to PDR from AFR
Kenneth Henry Kang to APD from PDR
Arto Kovanen to AFR from MAE
Noureddine Krichene to AFR from MED
Il Houng Lee to APD from PDR
Olin Liu to APD from MED
Alejandro Lopez Mejia to APD from INS
Kenneth M. Miranda to INV from APD
Carlos G. Muniz to WHD from PDR
Stefan Erik Oppers to PAR from EU1
B.R.H.S. Rajcoomar to STA from HRD
Alfred Schipke to EU2 from WHD
Joy Mylene ten Berge to EU2 from STA
Joan R. Wise to EXR from MED

What It's Like to Be A New Staff Member

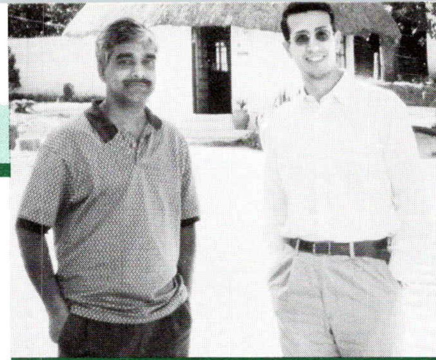
Marco Arnone joined the Fund in October 1999 as a participant in the Economist Program. He is enthusiastic about his career and shares his views about being a new staff member.

It took me a few moments and then it hit me: My new adventure and career at the Fund had begun. It had actually started some time before with an e-mail asking me to contact Roberto Ramaciotti. With that, I knew an offer would be forthcoming and was excited: in a few weeks I would be looking for a new house in DC and working in a new international environment. On October 27, after a warm welcome from Roberto and Thais Truran at I-Square and a brief introduction, I got my first assignment: a stack of forms to fill out.

I was assigned to the African Department and met my Division Chief, Jurgen Reitmaier, who introduced me to my other colleagues in the division and showed me a preliminary mission list for the coming weeks. The first few weeks presented many challenges, including taking part in a mission and, afterward, being given responsibility for a country only seven weeks after my arrival—but these are challenges I enjoy, since I am single and don't have family responsibilities. When asked to travel at short notice, I readily agreed. After all, that is one of the main reasons I'm here: to get hands-on experience in IMF member countries. And missions are the best way to do that. Between the administrative paperwork and taking care



Marco (l), speaks with Parmeshwar Ramlogan and Kelebone Maope, Minister of Finance of Lesotho.


Parmeshwar and Marco in a relaxed moment.

of all the other personal things like setting up a bank account and undergoing a medical exam, I started reading the RED and SR for Lesotho, my first mission country—now only three weeks away. The mission chief, Parmeshwar Ramlogan, and the country desk officer, Salim Darbar, were drafting the briefing paper (I would soon learn what it was) and printing tables (I would soon learn about them too). I was welcomed at my first division meeting and had to take what came next with a bit of humor, since people threw around a dazzling array of acronyms from ESAF to PRGF to PRSP to HIPC. I wrote them down, vowing to find out their meaning by the end of the day; otherwise, I would have been cut out of any possible conversation...and that would have been antisocial.

Division colleagues were helpful from the start, and the atmosphere was friendly; it is important to have this atmosphere, since you are joining a team and entering into a relationship based on trust and respect, and commitment has to be established among the members. The imminent mission was putting pressure on everyone involved. In Jurgen's words, my experience was going to be "baptism through fire," but I was curious and ready.

Throughout those early weeks, I worked closely with Salim, who introduced me to the niceties of data management. While I did have problems with sometimes uncooperative spreadsheets, there was a constructive attitude toward working them out. Working with spreadsheets took a lot of my time at first, since data management is a core competence of a country economist. It was also the source of much initial frustration because of the country's specificities and the need to get acquainted with the files.

In addition to the press of work—which spilled into evenings when we had the tranquility to work without interference from the daily business—Washington brims with high-quality cultural events. I enjoy the National Gallery, with its vast collections, special exhibitions, and concerts. I love walking around the Mall, where I can choose from an array of adventures.

My first mission

The mission was under way, arrangements for meeting with the authorities were finalized, and I was responsible for the monetary sector. I appreciated that as a sign that other staff on the team valued my work, and it was the best way for me to rapidly integrate into the team and contribute fully to the mission. I felt a little anxious, but positive and confident. The team, which included Paulo Lopes; Gamal (Jimmy) El-Masry (Indian Ocean); and Jean Vibar (Southern African I); quickly found its rhythm, under the very good leadership of Parmeshwar. Hard work and late hours are always part of a mission, but the atmosphere around the team was conducive to it, with a continuous exchange of information and opinions and a common purpose, in a good blend of professional expertise and human contact that makes it worthwhile.

Relations with the authorities are extremely cooperative and friendly, and we made a point, especially the mission chief, to convey that the Fund and the authorities were working together to achieve common goals: stability, growth, and poverty alleviation. It is important to build this constructive atmosphere, especially when all parties involved are doing their best and the problems at hand require the most serious commitment from the government to design and implement policies, and from the Fund to help design, and then support the implementation of, policies.

After about two weeks of practically living together, we even knew each other's preferred meals by heart. This personal knowledge helped the team communicate more deeply, quickly, and accurately, which is very important, since toward the end of the mission all the information gathered had to be rapidly and precisely translated into documents. At mission's end, many questions that had bothered me only a couple of weeks before were answered, thanks to the full support of my colleagues. And by then, those acronyms I was so bewildered about before flowed effortlessly off my tongue. On the way back, Jimmy and I went to Johannesburg from Maseru. On the plane, we met the Lesotho Minister of Trade and Industry, which gave us another opportunity to talk about the economy. After such an intense mission, there is only one reason to continue discussing a country's economic performance and prospects. You must enjoy it, and, above all, you must care about it! ◆