

The ARNIC Observer

The English-Speaking Union of the United States (ESUUS)

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC)

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“What makes somebody an American is not just blood or birth, but allegiance to our faith in the idea that anyone from anywhere can write the next great chapter of our story.”

— Barack Obama

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Winter Fun in New York City

BY ELLINA ZAIATS (RUSSIA)



The 85-foot-tall Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree lit by 45,000 energy efficient LED lights and crowned by a 9.5-foot wide Swarovski star is on display until January 7.

WINTER BLANKETS the city, all the more reason not to stay at home. The city in winter seems like a fairytale come true and it's sublimely appealing to immerse yourself in this wonderful holiday atmosphere. It's going to be my first Christmas in New York, so I have a To-do list: what I have to do, to see, to try this winter in NYC. I hope it will be useful information for other newcomers as well.

CHRISTMAS TREE AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

I think everyone definitely has to see this famous tree! The Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree has been a worldwide symbol of the holidays since 1933.

This year, the imposing 90-year-old, 13-ton, 85-foot Norway spruce hails from central Pennsylvania. Decorated with more than 45,000 LED lights and topped by a sparkling, 9.5-foot wide Swarovski star, it was lighted for the first time on Wednesday, December 3 at 7 p.m. in a ceremony headlined with live entertainment by Tony Bennett, Lady Gaga, and LeAnn Rimes, to name only a few performers. Tens of

thousands crowded the sidewalks for the event and hundreds of millions watched it live across the globe.

For the best viewing experience, enter Rockefeller Center from Fifth Avenue and stroll through the horn blowing angels toward the tree. The magnificent tree will remain on display until 8 p.m. on January 7, 2015, when it will be taken down and sent back to PA, and its wood will be used to build homes for Habitat for Humanity.

ICE SKATING IN CENTRAL PARK

Thousands of New Yorkers and tourists from around the world enjoy ice skating in Central Park each winter. Ice skating is fun, healthy, and could be the perfect way to spend a very romantic winter day or night or just a wonderful opportunity to meet

your friends outdoors in the brisk air instead of cooped up in a café. You have to pay to skate, but the cost depends on time and day of week. It's beautiful to skate in a scenic park surrounded by skyscrapers and Christmas decorations. So grab your skates and enjoy!

TIMES SQUARE NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

New Year's Eve in Times Square is an international phenomenon. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people go there and wait for hours in the cold of a New York winter for the famous Ball-drop ceremony. Nowadays, a worldwide audience can watch the festivities, thanks to the newest technologies. The lowering of the Ball has become the world's symbolic welcome to the New Year. If you would like to celebrate your first New Year in this city, this is a great opportunity to do so on the main square of New York.

So, enjoy wintertime! It's absolutely fabulous in New York.

Livin' the Good Life in Jersey City

BY DALILA BELHADI (ALGERIA)

JERSEY CITY IS IN THE STATE of New Jersey, just across the river from New York. It is the seat of Hudson County.

When you arrive there, you are immediately charmed by the beauty of American-style houses and buildings like those that you've seen in the movies, the beauty of the gardens, and the number of weekly farmers markets.

You will find a multicultural community with people from many countries around the world. In the area an expatriate enclave of Indians, North Africans and others grows. The mixing of nationalities is a strong point of the region, along with its proximity to New York City.

Exceptionally located, Jersey City is about 10 minutes south of the Big Apple by car. Alternatively, the train brings you to the heart of Manhattan in 20 minutes for shopping, museums, shows and all sorts of



The view of the Manhattan skyline from the esplanade at Newport Park (left) and a children's playground (right) in Jersey City, NJ.

other amusements and interests. If, on the other hand, your interests lie elsewhere, do not panic. The beaches of New Jersey are accessible and spectacular. Residents particularly appreciate Long Beach Island and the Jersey Shore beaches.

In Jersey City, life is gentle and quiet; there is little evidence of crime. It is a quiet town, away from the New York frenzy.

The quality of life is very good, with lots of children's play parks and public libraries. Several universities are nearby and many supermarkets cater to all communities.

There is even an area called Little India, where you will meet many Americans as well as foreigners. People are very open and welcome you very kindly. They are accustomed to seeing newcomers.

As for the weather, if you like distinct seasons, you will not be disappointed. Winter is normally quite cold with temperatures below freezing. In summer, however, it is hot and humid, quite confusing for a Mediterranean experiencing generally dry summers. Fall is a beautiful season, with dramatic colors and very often mild temperatures until Halloween.

As for spring, it doesn't last very long; snow can still sneak in the last days of April, and summer temperatures stun you from the first days of June on. Only May is almost untouched by these climatic quirks, when Jersey City shines bright and beckoning.



Photo by Wirun

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Editorial

English is the Key to Success

Every immigrant who comes here should be required within five years to learn English or to leave the country.
– Theodore Roosevelt (1918)

Former President Theodore Roosevelt uttered these words nearly a century ago, when groups of immigrants were arriving from southern Europe in record numbers never before imagined. Times have changed since then. Today, immigrants come from all parts of the world—Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South America, eastern Europe, as well as southern and northern Europe—speaking many more languages than those heard on these shores a hundred years ago.

It’s certainly true that learning English is more important than ever. Not only is it the language of the U.S., it is the international language of business, of science, of commerce, of social media, in use all around the world. Mastering the English language has become the key to success everywhere.

However, to prescribe a time frame, in this case five years, seems arbitrary. Why not six years? Or three years? Or 65 months? People acquire language proficiency at different rates depending not only on their learning ability and language skills, but also on the nature of their native language. For example, Chinese does not use the Roman alphabet to represent the sound system, instead it uses graphic characters and four tones to distinguish meaning. The grammar, especially with regard to verb tenses, is structured differently, too.

In Arabic, there are 28 aherouf (or letters) that in no way resemble their English counterparts. There are sounds in Arabic that do not exist in English, and vice versa. In addition, the language is read from right to left, not left to right, to name only a few differences.

Aside from the linguistic challenges in learning a new language, there is also the question of the age at which people start doing so and a person’s literacy in their native tongue. Also, what level of proficiency is meant? Does it mean functional language, to ask for directions, shop, or order food? Or does it mean the ability to engage in discussing abstract ideas of literature, politics, and philosophy?

Admittedly, it sounds reasonable that people should be able to learn a new language in five years. But to mandate this for all people arriving in this country, who are looking for work, raising children, and pressed for time, under the threat of either voluntary or forced deportation borders on the barbaric.

Ultimately, a newcomer to America should have the freedom to choose whether or not to learn English, even though opting not to do so may marginalize their life here. Perhaps a better idea is to encourage immigrants to learn English in order to prosper and experience all that America has to offer. Learning English should be the carrot and not the stick, and providing easier access to this endeavor and the means to do so would benefit everyone.

We are on the Web:
www.esu-arnic.org
<http://newimmigrantinthecity.wordpress.com>
www.facebook.com/ESU.ARNIC
www.twitter.com/esuarnic

Finding the American Revolution in NYC

BY PENG ZHANG (CHINA)

WE CAN EASILY FIND the American Revolution in Philadelphia and Boston, but how about NYC? With a little research and some effort, the symbols of the American Revolution can be discovered in NYC.

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
There is a copy of the Declaration of Independence, handwritten by Thomas Jefferson in iron gall ink in 1776, at the New York Public Library.

After the document was ratified on July 4, Jefferson wrote out several copies of the original text, and sent them to friends and mentors. This version, kept by the New York Public Library and seldom displayed for preservation reasons, is one of only two to survive intact.



Photo by Peng

Nathan Hale in City Hall Park

NATHAN HALE IN CITY HALL PARK
“I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

These famous last words obviously made its speaker, Nathan Hale, a symbol of the American Revolution.

Young Hale, a 21-year-old captain from the Continental Army, was captured and soon thereafter hanged by the occupying British in Manhattan in 1776. Today, the bronze statue of Nathan Hale stands in City Hall Park, as a testament to his patriotism and loyalty.

FEDERAL HALL ON WALL STREET
The vital fruit of the American Revolution was the birth of the American government in 1789.

Significantly, on the balcony of Federal Hall on Wall Street, George Washington took the oath of office as the first President of the United States, and this building was home to the first Congress, Supreme Court, and Executive Branch offices.

So, don’t you agree that finding the American Revolution in NYC is a piece of cake?



Photo by Peng

George Washington at Federal Hall

Immigrants and American Culture

BY YOUNOUSSA CAMARA (GUINEA)

It is never said enough! The greatness of America is not just because of its skyscrapers, the power of its army, nor its economics. It’s because Americans have built a special culture unlike that of any other nation of the globe. That makes it a most welcome and wonderful land. There are four qualities that exemplify the daily behavior of Americans.

THE WELCOMING LAND
AT FIRST CONTACT, an American introduces himself by smiling and shaking hands and with expressions and questions such as Nice to meet you, How I can help you? You are very welcome. These make you comfortable. According to many immigrants these behaviors demonstrate that America is the country for all.

THANKS AND APOLOGIES
Americans are quick to express forgiveness, when they sense they have hurt someone, using phrases like: I apologize, Excuse me, I’m so sorry. Americans thank right away after any service. And push other people to indulge in the same act after service is given. For American people it is normal to let



Courtesy of blog.bellefnet.com

Children of many nations on the 4th of July

people know their feelings and it is better to recognize any help or service from someone.

LOVE AND BLESSINGS
Americans have different religions, different political opinions, and are of different races, but all of them love their country, and some sacrifice themselves by fighting for it. Americans always bless people and bless the land itself. It doesn’t matter who you are. But at the end of any speech Americans say I love you, God bless you, God bless America.

Furthermore, according to some sources, to be a citizen, it’s necessary to take an oath to defend America anywhere and in anyway.

LAND FOR ALL
America has become the land for all. Indeed, all American people whether blue, black, purple or of any other color believe that this country was built by immigrants. Everyone came from somewhere else to get here.

America is truly the sweet land of liberty.



Courtesy of The Economist

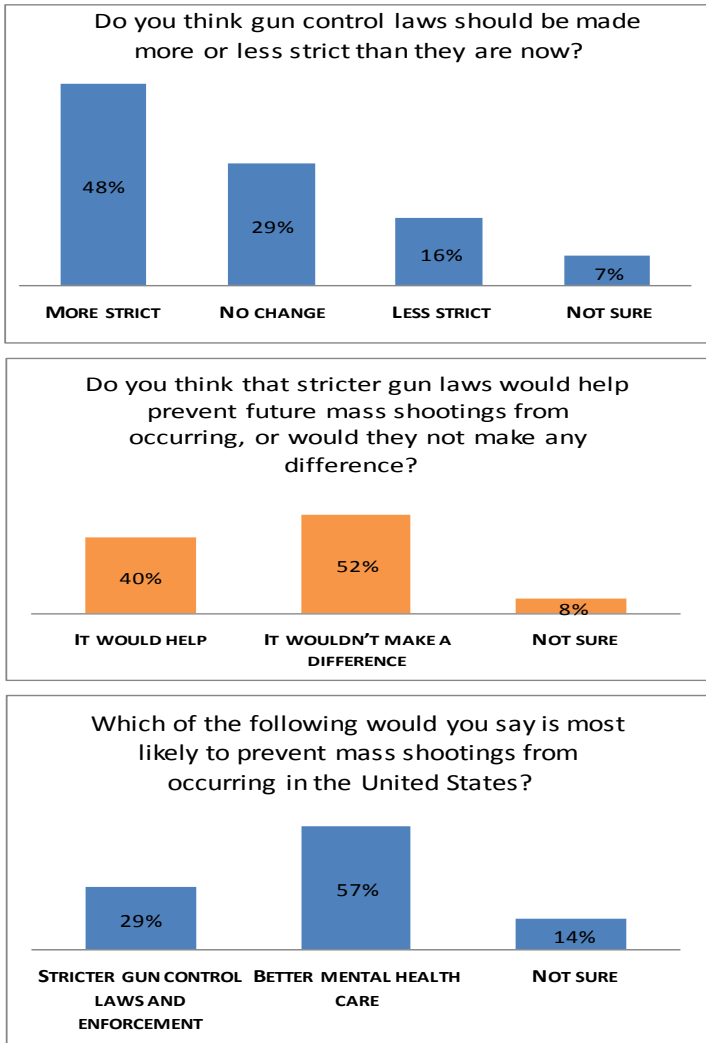
A rally for immigration reform in NYC

Gun Control in the U.S.

BY AMARA LAKHOUS (ALGERIA/ITALY)

Gun Control Survey

RESULTS OF A YOUgov/HUFFINGTON POST SURVEY OF 1,000 U.S. ADULTS INTERVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER 2013



ON JULY 20, 2012, James Eagan Holmes, 24 years old, killed 20 people in the Century Movie Theatre in Aurora, Colorado. A similar tragedy resulted in the deaths of twelve students and one teacher in 1999 at Columbine High School in the same state.

What is wrong? How can we stop these mass murders? What is the solution?

The debate about gun control in the United States is not new; it has been in public discourse for more than a century. It is very relevant because it concerns everyone who lives in this country. There is no agreement among Americans on this issue. Simply stated, there are two opposing positions. What are the motivations?

THE OPPONENTS OF GUN CONTROL

Very often the opponents mention the Second Amendment of the American Constitution: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." For them, having guns is a very important right that permits them to defend themselves, their families, and their private property against criminals. Furthermore, they argue that citizens should have the means to defend their nation against potential dictatorial governments.

THE PROPONENTS OF GUN CONTROL

Proponents refute this interpretation of the Second Amendment, saying that the principle of self-defense may have been true for the earlier settlers, but today, Americans live under very different circumstances that are certainly safer. For example, anyone can call the police if they feel in

danger. In addition, there is little risk of political tyranny, because American society is mature and the United States has very strong democratic institutions.

Gun control advocates believe the Second Amendment has been subject to a misreading by the Supreme Court. The amendment specifically pertains to a "militia" and allows this organized body of citizens to bear arms, and doesn't extend that right to individuals, per se.

The biggest problem is the ease by which anyone can obtain weapons. In some states, almost anyone can possess guns, even when he or she is mentally ill. Proponents believe that gun control will drastically reduce the violence and acts of suicide committed with guns.

Many people criticize the gun lobby, especially the powerful organization called the National Rifle Association (NRA). "For many years, the gun lobby has had an advantage both in terms of funding and a well-organized and committed grassroots, which it has used to hold back efforts to strengthen gun laws that are supported by the vast majority of Americans, including the vast majority of gun owners," says Daniel Webster, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research. "For years, politicians felt that there was more to lose than to gain by supporting much-needed reforms to keep guns from dangerous people."

In conclusion, I think this debate is a very healthy sign of democracy in the U.S., but it's time to find a solution or a good compromise. I lived in Europe, especially in Italy and France, for a long time. You must apply for the right to use guns and you have to give a convincing reason for your request. Perhaps Americans should learn and draw inspiration from the good experiences and paradigms of gun use around the world.

De Gustibus

Practicing the Healthy Life

BY WIRUN PITIGER (THAILAND)

DO YOU KNOW MACROBIOTICS?

Macrobiotics is the practical application of the natural laws of change. The term comes from the Greek; *macro* means great, and *bios* means life. A macrobiotic regimen involves eating grains as a staple food supplemented with other foods, such as locally grown vegetables, and avoiding the use of highly processed or refined foods and most animal products.

It also is a system used to engender good health using both traditional wisdom and modern knowledge. It is not simply or solely a way of eating, but a way of living. Making healthy choices in food, activities, and attitude all have an impact on our body and our mind.

When I first became macrobiotic, I was so excited about the changes in my outlook on life. I came to NYC seven months ago and I started eating healthy foods and doing yoga. I thought this was a good way for me. Some people don't care about good food. They are still eating junk foods and do not exercise.

If you are looking for healthy food in NYC, I recommend you go to the Japanese restaurant named Souen. It serves tasty organic macrobiotic food. They have three branches. The one I like to go to is in Soho at Sixth Ave. and Prince Street. The ambiance at the Soho branch is simple and clean with paintings and flowers tastefully placed.

My favorite dish on the menu is a Macro plate. When the waiters placed the food in front of me, I thought they made a mistake and gave me a double order. There was enough food to feed an army. The plate is a nutritionally and visually well-balanced array of brown rice, beans, seaweed, leafy greens, squash, carrot, and broccoli. It's presented in

a pleasing, artful display of color. You have a choice of two dressings, either tahini-dill or sesame vinaigrette, to enhance the flavor of the meal. It's not only delicious, it's nutritious, and makes me feel balanced in mind and body. Such wonderful food! I love it.

If you would like to prepare macrobiotic meals at home, the ingredients can be easily obtained at your local super market. I do suggest using organic ingredients because of the flavor and nutritional value, despite the added expense. Remember! "You are what you eat!" Bon appétit!



Photo by Wirun

Abbondanza! Macrobiotic meals are more than just healthful; they're yummy, too.

Good Deal, Bad Deal, No Matter — Just Get It!

BY ROMAN NYKOLAICHUK (UKRAINE)

GIFTS, GIFTS, SALE, GIFTS. OK. I am ready to possess all this stuff. So many people will have presents from me on Christmas and New Years!

Life in New York City at Christmastime reminds me of a big beehive or an anthill. Everyone is running somewhere and buying all that can be bought. Huge Christmas sales cover the city. Christmas windows shine, luring people to stores. They want to take a small piece of generosity and kindness to relatives. It's cold outside and people want to warm up from the warmth of hearts.

In our city, like in many countries, we have long-standing and deep traditions to honor on Christmas. Let's remember the O. Henry story, *The Gift of the Magi*, about how one young couple had gotten presents for each other. She cut her beautiful hair and sold it to buy a watch case for her husband. He sold his watch to get a comb for his beloved wife's gorgeous hair.

Almost all stores have return services, where you can bring back your stuff. A lot of customers use it a lot. After the holidays long lines at return counters show you how successful they were.

Families are extremely busy, busy enough to lose their children in the stores. In Macy's, for example, Santa will pet your kids while you do your shopping. At Lord & Taylor, Christmas windows exhibit the same magical attraction. Children and adults are mesmerized by the charming displays.

The most popular place to get Christmas gifts in New York City, surely, is the area around the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. When you want to be absolutely satisfied, you should find some presents there. But ignore Fifth Avenue because on this street the allure is too great. You'll spend all your money here. Don't do it, please.

The Christmas decorations are visible and the songs are audible everywhere; they wake up our hearts and imagination. Holidays are coming.

So, we wish you a merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Just get to it and don't forget the long return line is waiting for you after the holidays.

Two Historic Tributes

BY ASSELIA ZHUANYSHEVA (KAZAKHSTAN)



Irish Hunger Memorial Garden

IF YOU WANT TO SPEND A GREAT DAY in New York, try exploring part of Lower Manhattan. Take a subway to Fulton or Chambers. As you walk down Vesey Street you will see skyscrapers; stop when you get to North End Avenue.

Here you will see the Irish Hunger Memorial Garden. It is located on the corner of Vesey Street and North End Avenue near the southern tip of the island and was designed to be a beautiful example of outdoor art in the city. One and a half million people died between 1845 and 1852 in the famine in Ireland caused by a potato blight, which all but destroyed the main food source of the time. The Garden is a monument to those who perished during *An Gorta Mór*, which in Irish Gaelic means The Great Hunger, and serves as a symbol to highlight areas of the world affected by hunger today.

Many who survived the famine did so because they emigrated to the U.S.; therefore, the site is of great historical importance to people tracing their Irish heritage, 800,000 of whom now call New York City home.

The site also incorporates stones from all of the 32 counties of Ireland; more than 60 varieties of native Irish flora such as heaths, heathers, and gorse give the visitor a taste of the harsh but stunning landscape found in the western portion of the country.

The tunnel entrance to the open-topped stone cottage consists of a winding path, which ascends 25 feet from the corner of Vesey to the Western end of the garden. It offers sensational vistas of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The exterior wall of the memorial is covered by almost two miles of illuminated text including 110 quotations, letters, poems, recipes, songs, and statistics. An audio tract plays accounts of world hunger as visitors tour the site.

ELLIS ISLAND

From 1892 to 1924, Ellis Island was America’s largest and most active entry point for immigrants, where over 12 million arrivals were processed.

On average, the inspections process took approximately three to seven hours. For the vast majority of immigrants, Ellis Island truly was an “Island of Hope”—the first stop on their way to new opportunities and experiences in America. For others, it became the “Island of Tears”—a place where families were separated and individuals were denied entry into this country.

Walking along the waterfront on well-laid paths is a treat. The cool breezes from the Hudson River, numerous ferries plying the waters, and people walking or jogging contribute to the picturesque scene. The panorama of downtown Manhattan across the river is a lovely sight, especially at sunset.

Lights reflected off the world financial center enhance the gorgeous views in the evening. If you go, be sure to get yourself an ice cream from the truck that stands near the Path station.



Ellis Island today

Soccer: a Sanctuary for Immigrants in NYC

BY SIDAHMED TFEIL (MAURITANIA)

THERE’S A CLEAR DIFFERENCE between here and the rest of world, especially when we home in on one aspect of life in the USA, namely, sports. The game of soccer is the must popular sport throughout the world, except in the USA!

The four major professional sports leagues in the United States consist of Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Football League (NFL), and the National Hockey League (NHL). Major League Soccer has yet to reach the status and popularity levels like those of the soccer leagues of its international counterparts.

Interestingly enough, the immigrants of New York City, hailing from a wide variety of nations, gather to play soccer, indulging in all the camaraderie this popular sport has to offer.



Two teams square off at soccer with players from the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico and the U.S.

For an hour and a half, players leave differences of their cultures and backgrounds off the field, and revel in some good ol’ Football. Language is not a barrier: It’s your feet that are doing all the talking!

One thing is for certain, you can bet on soccer being played in one of the many NYC parks just about every weekend. No good weather? No problem! There are indoor opportunities to play.

It is fair enough to say that with the arrival of so many immigrants (in the recent two decades) from parts of the “Other World,” there has indeed been a realization

that Soccer merits being a high status sport in the USA. This is not only because America is a melting pot, particularly NYC, of soccer players, but also because the U.S. does not want to be left in the shadows while the “Other World” is deeply involved in the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), more importantly, the FIFA World Cup!

It was not until 1993, barely 21 years ago, that the United States created MLS (Major League Soccer). MLS consists of only U.S. and Canadian Clubs. And during these 21 years, it has been an uphill battle for the sport to gain the respect it rightfully deserves. Oftentimes teams don’t even have their own stadiums to play in and must look to American football and baseball stadiums to host their matches. Also, over the years, some of the clubs have been dissolved, and many ended up being combined. It was not until the year 2007 that we started to see some serious changes in the MLS, especially with the signing of David Beckham (we can also call him an immigrant) as the league’s first designated player.

Since 2007, FIFA’s popularity has soared to new heights within the United States, and with that there has been a craving to create clubs and teams with great edge and capability. Only last year the MLS introduced NYC- FC (its 20th soccer club). With the coming of 2015 and with rising popularity, the MLS has managed to gain new branding initiatives and even an exciting new logo, representative of the fact that the soccer sport is finally gaining the status and respect it deserves in this country. We can only hope that this trend continues upward and onward.

Inquiring Photographer

What can you recommend to a new immigrant to the U.S.?

BY MARIE NGO TONYE (CAMEROON)

Learn English; communicate with people. If someone asks you a question, it helps to know how to answer. Make sure that you bring enough money to support yourself for the first four months.

— KHADIR LAZAR (Morocco)



The first thing is to respect the country’s laws. Go to school to learn English to have an essential skill in the marketplace. Finally, get more information from the government about assistance and services.

— ABOUBACAR DIABY (Guinea)

First enroll in the ESU program and make as many friends as possible there. Upgrade your spirit and outlook in this new country. Experience more styles of living.

— CINDY ZHOU (China)



Attend ARNIC to improve your English skills. At the ESU, be respectful of others and get to know them. Share your stories, your feelings about good and bad views of America. Keep pursuing your goals.

— ABDOU BELEMNABA (Burkina Faso)