

Portrait of Dramane DARAVE



Everyone working for MONUSCO and those outside the Mission who have a special interest in the Mission's activities know Dramane. His responsibility, inter alia, consists in sending out the Strategic Communication and Public Information products. As a result, he is the one on whom internet users vent their humors, either to congratulate or to blame the Mission. He is our Webmaster, our "Geek"*, with rimmed eyeglasses, button-down shirt, sometimes with ties, sometimes with bowties, front-pleated trousers, always holding a computer. I swear you will never see Dramane without a screen: computer, telephone, tablet or all of them at once. One may tell me it is normal because he is one of the two dot zero generation!

I wonder how this generation manage; when the young people leave one screen, you may think they go to visit a library or to the kitchen nearby!!! No, they shift to another screen, and then still and so on throughout the whole day. During the night you may think they are sleeping quietly in their bed? Make no mistake, for them a bed is not just for sleeping, it is the place for them to watch preferred film series on their tablet, to share WhatsApps messages by the dozens, to snapchat, to Facebook, to tweet...anything you might think of, except for sleeping. I frankly wonder if in their old age they will still know how to talk face-to-face with each other or engage in a dialogue.

Well, I'll stop being "reac". But what words shall I use which would best express all the good that we, in the Strategic Communication Division, think of my dear Dramane? Upon joining the Public information Division, he was reporting to me. Who else but me can better judge of his professionalism, his hard work and his sense of commitment? So here we go, Dramane. First tell us when joined the Division? ***"I got to DRC in August 2014 and I immediately took up the position of Webmaster and social Media Manager in the Publications Unit. When the Multimedia Unit was set up I was incorporated into it but retained the same terms of reference. My role consists in ensuring that MONUSCO's on-line platforms (Web site, Intranet, and Social Medias) are functional and regularly updated, implementing MONUSCO's on-line communication strategy, enhancing the visibility of MONUSCO's activities through the Internet and creating internet user loyalty so they continue to follow the news of the Mission."*** No doubt he masters his subject, as you can see. Nothing outside the internet or intranet interests him...!

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I exaggerate here, of course, but only slightly... Tell me, what course of study did you follow at the university for you to be so new-tech-savvy? ***"I hold a diploma in IT design engineering, obtained from the University Cheickh Anta Diop of Dakar in 2005."*** Hum hum Dakar...And you didn't stay in Senegal, such a beautiful country, the country of Teranga? And where maybe a young Senegalese lady could have become...Well, I am straying a bit here, let us get back to our topic. What have been your professional experiences ever since? ***"I have worked as a computer specialist and web applications developer for social development organizations, press agencies, research institutes."*** And then you joined the United Nations – was it your personal choice or just a happy coincidence? ***"Since early childhood it has always been my ambition to work for an international organization, preferably the United Nations Organization for several reasons: to make a contribution towards building a peaceful and just society, to work in a multi-cultural environment, to exercise mobility in my career through different assignments."***

With your eyes always glued on the screen, do you maintain good relations with your colleagues? ***"Upon my arrival at MONUSCO, my colleagues immediately welcomed me with open arms. And over time they have become friends, brothers and sisters whom I will always hold in my heart wherever I go."*** Yes, West Africans do easily blend in with other people and make new friends quickly. Dramane is a Burkinabe of Malian origins, who is not afraid to immerse in a multicultural environment. On the contrary, ***"it is a wonderful opportunity for me insofar as it is one of the motivations that drove me to the United Nations. A multi-cultural environment actually makes people open-minded and more tolerant towards others."***

Let me leave it here for a while and hand over to Yachim Maïga, his direct supervisor and chief of the Multimedia Unit to talk about his staff member. Let us listen to what he has to say about him: ***"Dramane was on leave in Mali when I got to Kinshasa in October 2015 to take up my new office as head of the Multimedia Unit, one of the sections of MONUSCO Communication Division. As he got wind of my designation as head of the division, my future colleague hastened to write and extend warm welcome; he also took the opportunity to ask me if I had any parcel in Mali that I should collect and bring for him. That is how I came to know Dramane, before meeting him; in fact he is the type of persons who are always ready to offer their help. When he got to the office from his leave, I could recognize him right from our first encounter; Dramane is very respectful of the hierarchy. Ever since, Dramane never departed from formulas such as "Mr. Maïga", in spite of my persistent efforts to have him call me by my first name."***

From a professional point of view, Dramane DARAVE is dedicated staff member. He embodies the UN core values: integrity, excellence... He is always ready to take additional tasks and discharges his duties within allotted timeframes. He keeps low profile and is very discreet; as MONUSCO website and social networks manager, he has nurtured good working relations with

interlocutors from civilian as well as military components and UN Agencies based on his availability and sense of well-done job. His great experience and knowledge in the area of social networks contributed significantly to the visibility and promotion of MONUSCO's image. He can be portrayed as outstanding civil servant, professionally competent, highly motivated and proactive in his daily work. In spite of the very precarious nature of his contract as United Nations volunteer, he has assumed his tasks with keen sense of responsibility just like a hero in the background.

I am honored to have known him and every supervisor should feel happy to have a colleague like Dramane Darave whom I should only blame one thing: his being shy to the point of referring to me as an elder brother who also wishes to be called by his first name." Had I know how to indulge in more onomatopoeias while writing I would afford, even though this would not be enough to describe the sound I wish to produce; so, I just take my hat off to this staff member who has been the pride of all his supervisors. Anyway, Hats off to this artist!

Charles Antoine Bambara, Director of MONUSCO Strategic Communication Division went on to say: *"Everybody unanimously acknowledge Dramane's talents and passions for his work as webmaster. Through his know-how, seriousness, competence, Dramane has ably filled the void left by his predecessor. Known as highly courteous, Dramane is the kind of staff members who take initiatives when necessary and provide technical responses to the problems inherent to his work or to requests from the*



hierarchy. Supervisors' life would be much easier if all the staff members could follow in the footsteps of Dramane." I hope your last sentence does not target me!

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Dramane, we have been lucky to serve in this beautiful country in respect of its fauna and flora; a wealth unfortunately overshadowed by waves of unrests affecting the country. That is why we are here. Do you foresee any way out of this situation? Do you believe the United Nations are doing right when providing support to Government officials and public institutions? ***“DR Congo is a huge country with lots of economic potentials and cultural diversities; I admire the hospitality of its populations. Unfortunately the country is still prey to continued activism from armed groups and endless political crises. However, I am fully confident that Congolese will find the necessary resources to make their beautiful country more prosperous and peaceful with the help of sister African countries and others. UN has significantly contributed to easing the situation in DRC plagued by protracted violence. We have to bear in mind that UN role consists in providing support to the Congolese Government and Institutions. It would therefore be difficult for the UN to impose on the Government. Sincere collaboration between the UN and the Government is therefore key to a better implementation of the mandates entrusted to the Mission by the UN Security Council.”***

Gender balance is also part of the UN missions to achieve a fair world. Did you have this included into your actions? ***“Gender balance is extremely important for me. I believe men and women should complement each other and there should be no barrier against any one of them to use their potentials fully. As far as I am concerned, I implement Gender balance in my daily activities.”***

Dramane got married years ago. He is still in his honeymoon if we may say so; we can see him with a big smile on his face when talking about it. Let us give him twenty years from now; I am sure he will talk about it in a more moderate way. Apparently, his wife has not dictated her Ten Commandments yet...Has she already started cracking down? Well, I should love her, what has she already achieved in this respect? ***“I have already started doing some housework like cleaning the house and washing clothes and dishes...”*** Is that all? She is really nice! What else do you do during the weekend besides cleaning some crumbs and dusting off some grains of powder? ***“I read newspapers and novels. I listen to music. I love the Congolese music. It is living and can keep one in good mood for the whole day. I don't feel bored with Congolese music played by very talented musicians. I really rhapsodize over Congolese elegance.”*** As you know we are not going to stay in DRC forever. Can you share with me your memories of the DRC? ***“My stay in DRC helped me acquire more knowledge about the country, the people and the resources. I have had the opportunity to meet with people with great intellectual and moral values and to discover the rich and diversified culture of this country. DRC is the kind of countries one may remain tied with after living in.”*** You will be ever remembered Dramane with all the brilliant testimonies rendered by your supervisors, praising your skills; I do support everything they said but I will miss you more for your generosity above all that. No need to showcase, you and I know. You have understood that in the art of giving and receiving, the act of giving provides more joy than receiving. I would like to conclude with this Word: THANK YOU!