



On the 25th October, the United Nations celebrates [UN Staff Day](#) .

The UN Regional Information Centre marked the day by welcoming two Belgian martial arts world champions of Moroccan descent who demonstrated how sport can encourage togetherness in society.

The event was organised for United Nations staff in Brussels to take time out from the working day and reflect on why we are proud to be working for this Organisation.

The two athletes explained how sport can encourage peace, development, and inclusive societies.

Jaouad Achab, an expert in Taekwondo from the Belgian Olympic team, moved to Brussels from Morocco in 2009, and learned English, Dutch, and French in a year to better integrate into society and improve his education.

His goal has always been to become an Olympian, and he recalled that getting Belgian citizenship in 2013 was “the best day of my life” because it meant he could join their Olympic team. In his own words, he “choose a better life via sport”.

Amal Amjahid is the first Belgian woman to become a world champion in her martial art – Brazilian Jiu-jitsu. She chose the sport because “even the weakest can win” and she provided evidence of this as she threw Jaouad to the floor with ease during her demonstration.



In addition to striving to win competitions, both athletes cited their passion for sport as a means for a better world.

They both said that all of the Sustainable Development Goals are important, although Jaouad selected Goal 1, No Poverty, since his family’s poverty stopped his mother from achieving her goals.

Amal chose Goal 4, Quality Education, as the most important, pointing out that it is the platform on which all the other goals stand.

When asked about the UN's Together Campaign – a campaign to highlight the positive contributions that migrants and refugees make to countries of origin, transit and destination – Jaouad replied that he was “very happy that sport can bring people together. In my competitions, there are 75 countries fighting each other – different religions, different races – we challenge each other, but in the end we are friends”.



For Amal's father, what he had come to realise was that, “people see Amal succeed, and they realise that they can as well, no matter where they come from”.

Deputy Director of UNRIC, Caroline Petit, concluded the session by saying that “meeting and sharing stories with these two young champions, whose objective is to help others build confidence and build a better life for their community, was a humbling and human experience”.

