

THE UN'S MISSION. WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED TO SAVE SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS FROM THE SCOURGE OF WAR, WHICH TWICE IN OUR LIFETIME HAS BROUGHT UNTOLD SORROW TO MANKIND; AND TO REAFFIRM FAITH IN FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS, IN THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE HUMAN PERSON, IN THE EQUAL RIGHTS OF MEN AND WOMEN AND OF NATIONS LARGE AND SMALL; AND TO ESTABLISH CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR THE OBLIGATIONS ARISING FROM TREATIES AND OTHER SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW CAN BE MAINTAINED; AND TO PROMOTE SOCIAL PROGRESS AND BETTER STANDARDS OF LIFE IN LARGER FREEDOM. **AS INSPIRING AND ESSENTIAL AS SEVENTY YEARS AGO.**



UNA-UK is the foremost advocate for UK action at the United Nations and a UK-wide movement of 20,000 global citizens

70 years ago, we were founded to serve as a bridge between the UN and people in this country. Today, this mission is more important than ever. From climate change to displacement, the challenges facing the world require an effective UN, supported by an engaged UK Government and public that understands how much global solutions will deliver for them.

To succeed, we need your support.
We all have a stake in an effective UN.



UNA-UK To support our work, visit www.una.org.uk/donate

New World

Special issue // 2015 // www.una.org.uk
Bringing news and comment on the UN to the UK

UN70 special issue

UNA-UK has produced this special issue of *New World* to mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in 2015. It features:

- Facts and figures on the UN
- Commentary on its evolving role
- Our big hope for UN reform
- Stories from its seven decades
- UNA-UK's own 70-year story

It also includes a call to action to our members and the public at large: support your United Nations this year and take part in UNA-UK's campaigns and events.

www.una.org.uk/UN70

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Opinions in *New World* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, UNA-UK or the UN.

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Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, June 2015

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Now more than ever
Natalie Samarasinghe on why
UNA-UK needs your support

This special issue of *New World*, produced to mark the UN's 70th anniversary, seeks to tell the story of the Organization in different ways: through facts and figures, commentary on its evolving role and vignettes that highlight its achievements and challenges over the past seven decades.

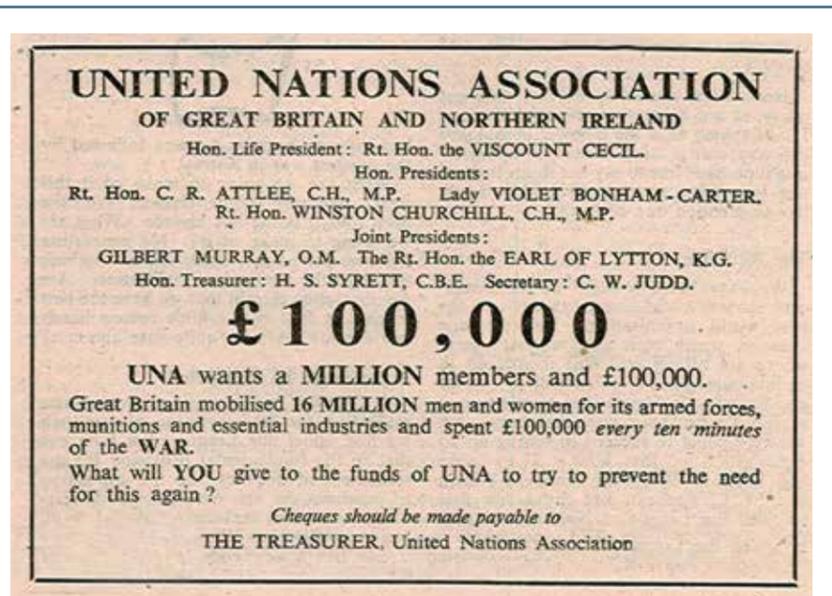
There is forward-looking analysis too. On pages 8–9, UNA-UK's Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, and I reflect on the UN's changing operating environment, in particular the decline in political support for our global system. On pages 10–12, UNA-UK makes the case for the one reform that arguably has the greatest potential to transform the UN: a better process to select its Secretary-General.

We also issue a challenge to the public at large: support your United Nations in 2015. This year, governments have the opportunity to adopt a new development agenda and a global climate deal. Their agreement and implementation depend on an effective UN.

We must show our governments that we want them to invest in an effective UN and that we want them to use this platform to forge the global solutions we need. Throughout 2015, UNA-UK will continue to organise campaigns and events to help people take action. To find out more, visit www.una.org.uk/UN70.

While researching UNA-UK's history (we turn 70 this year too – see pages 25–26) I came across a “Call to Alertness” in the November 1945 issue of *New World's* predecessor. It states:

“For the sake of future generations, we must never again be so absorbed in our own little private affairs as to become oblivious to the larger issues at stake in the world ... We must expect action from the House of Commons when it is needed, and must not grouse if that action interferes with our comforts ... We must keep ourselves conversant with international affairs, and see to it that our votes are cast at parliamentary elections in favour of candidates who are well-



UNA-UK needs your support more than ever. Please help us continue to make the case for the UN in the UK:
www.una.org.uk/donate

informed ... Once and for all, we must grasp the obvious fact that we are not only members of a nation; we are also world citizens and what goes on in the world concerns us vitally.”

For the sake of future generations, we must never again be so absorbed in our own little private affairs as to become oblivious to the larger issues at stake in the world

These words encapsulate UNA-UK's mission past and present: enshrining the values of the UN Charter in the hearts of people in this country, and ensuring strong UK support for the Organization.

Despite the many global issues affecting the UK, from climate change to terrorism, pandemics to refugee flows, foreign policy was largely absent from the election campaign. The next five years of British politics may well be dominated by “a tale of two unions”: Britain's relationship with the European Union, and the future of the United Kingdom itself.

The need for informed debate on the UK's global role has never been more clear or urgent. As the UK's leading, and often only, UN voice, this Association must make the case for the UN in this

country, loudly and compellingly. To do so, we need your support.

I have now been at UNA-UK for nearly 10 years and one thing we are not very good at is asking for money. We do so very reluctantly if at all, preferring to ask for support for the UN's frontline agencies. But what these agencies really need is funding from governments and concerted efforts to address, and prevent, the crises they are trying to ameliorate. And governments will not act without pressure from civil society and a mandate from the public. This is where UNA-UK comes in.

Flicking through our 1945 magazine, I found the notice featured above: a bold call for one million supporters and £100,000 for the fledgling Association, accompanied by a note from our first Director: “A forbidding figure in these days of so many appeals? Not on your life! We shall get it if the consciences of the people act.”

Today, we need to be just as bold if we are to fulfill our crucial mission. This Director would like to see one million supporters *and* £1 million.

I hope you will give UNA-UK a gift for its 70th birthday. It's quick and easy to do at www.una.org.uk/donate and it will make a great difference to our work.

This is a year of enormous challenges, challenges that need a strong, credible and effective UN. UNA-UK will continue to bring this message to policymakers, schools and communities in the UK and beyond. I hope we can count on your support. ●

THEN

“I commend to you the work of UNA, as work that is absolutely vital to the future, in which we all have a personal interest, and which we ought to relate to all our activities and have it always in mind ... This work has its bearing on our endeavour to get human beings to live together as brothers and sisters”

Clement Attlee, UK Prime Minister, 1945

The UN had
51
founding member states

Including: Chile, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Liberia, Philippine Republic, Syria and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Adopted in 1946, the UN General Assembly's first resolution was on nuclear disarmament. At that time, the US was the world's only nuclear power.

The Security Council had 11 members: five permanent – China, France, USSR, UK and US, and six elected – Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, Netherlands and Poland.



Trygve Lie (Norway) became the first UN Secretary-General.

The UN Charter makes **no mention of environmental issues.**

In 1945, “we the peoples” – the opening words of the Charter – numbered some
2.35 billion worldwide

NOW

“For the past 70 years, UNA-UK has been an essential bridge between the UN and the people in the United Kingdom. We welcome your constructive criticisms and your invaluable support for our mission to build a safer, more peaceful and more sustainable world”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, 2014

The UN has
193
member states

The last member admitted was South Sudan in July 2011, following its independence referendum earlier that year.

The UN's disarmament vision remains distant. China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia and the UK have also joined the nuclear club.

The Security Council was enlarged to include 10 elected members from 1966. The five permanent members remain the same and all five are still in the top 10 nations for global economic and military power.



Ban Ki-moon (South Korea) is currently Secretary-General. No woman has ever held the role.

There are now over **500 multilateral environment agreements.**

Today,
 the UN serves over
7 billion people



THE NEWS IN 1945

● Global displacement crisis

May 1945: the number of displaced persons (DPs) has topped 40 million in Europe. This total looks set to increase, as Eastern European countries expel millions of ethnic Germans and hundreds of thousands of their own citizens flee Soviet occupation. In China, a staggering 95 million people have been uprooted. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) is struggling to cope. The Allies' reluctance to take in DPs means UNRRA is focused on repatriation, not resettlement. One of its biggest challenges is handling Jewish DPs, many of whom cannot or do not wish to return to the countries that have treated them so appallingly.

“Those who gave their lives in order that we may be free, those who lost their homes, those who suffered, and still suffer, from the consequences of war have given us a sacred mandate: that is to build a firm foundation for the peace of the world”

Trygve Lie, UN Secretary-General, 1946

● UNO is born

On 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, 50 countries, representing all regions of the world, signed the United Nations Charter. Opening with the words “We the peoples”, it resolves to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights” and “promote social progress and better standards of life”. The new United Nations Organisation (UNO) formalises the wartime alliance. It will feature a Security Council with unprecedented powers of enforcement and special privileges, including veto rights, for the big powers: China, France, the Soviet Union, Britain and the US.

● Experiment in democracy

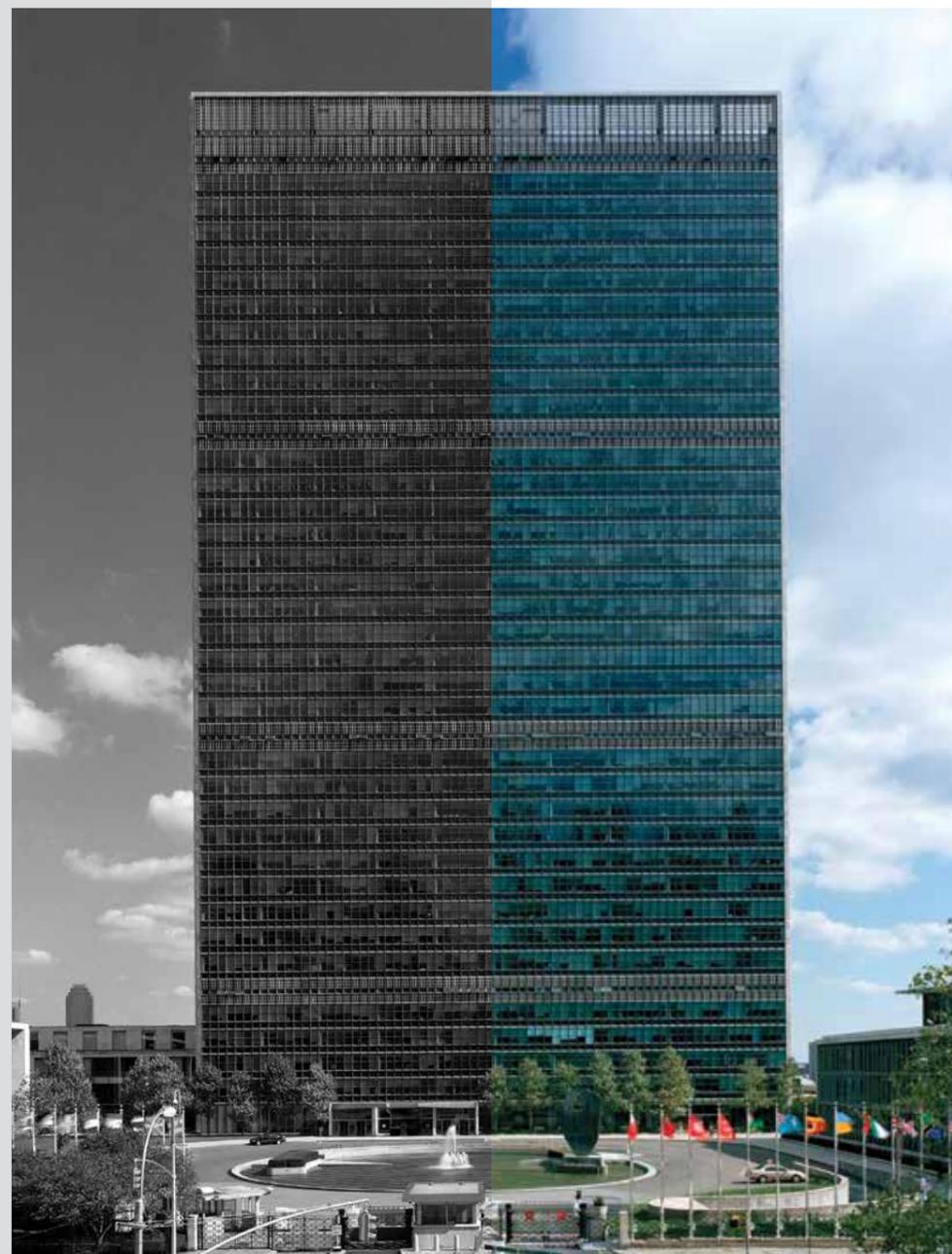
The UNO conference – described as an “experiment in democracy” by the US – involved over 200 civil society groups, some as members of delegations. Among these groups were several women’s organisations that, with support from influential female and male delegates, succeeded in securing explicit reference to women’s rights in the Charter.

● Second US atom attack

American forces have dropped another atomic bomb on Japan. Nagasaki was hit on 9 August, just three days after Hiroshima was devastated. Both bombs are thought to have killed 200,000 people. As these are the first attacks to use to atomic weaponry, the long-term effects of the bomb are yet to be ascertained.

● Gay men not freed

Many of those interned by the Nazis for homosexuality have not been freed. Instead, the Allies are requiring them to serve out their sentences in prison, with years spent in concentration camps not



counting towards time served. Between 1933 and 1945, around 100,000 men were arrested under Nazi laws proscribing homosexuality. Over 150 countries, including the UK, have similar laws in place.

● French women vote

On 21 October, women in France voted for the first time in parliamentary elections. Suffrage was extended to women (except female Muslims in French Algeria) by the French provisional government in 1944. Indonesia, Italy, Senegal, Togo and Yugoslavia have also adopted female suffrage this year. Women have equal voting rights in 30 countries.

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Get in touch

UNA-UK welcomes your thoughts and comments on this special issue of *New World*, which is available online at www.una.org.uk/magazine.

You can email the editor, Natalie Samarasinghe, on samarasinghe@una.org.uk, tweet [@Natalie_UNA](https://twitter.com/Natalie_UNA) or write to **UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL**

New World – required reading for global citizens from all walks of life.

www.una.org.uk/magazine

THE NEWS IN 2015

● Global displacement crisis

The number of people forced to flee their homes has continued to rise since the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported last year that displacement had surpassed 50 million people for the first time since the Second World War. This is a global crisis, affecting countries from Colombia to Myanmar, Somalia to Ukraine. Syria is the biggest new source of refugees, with nearly four million, over half of whom are hosted by Turkey and Lebanon. The UK has committed some £800m to the crisis but has taken in just 187 Syrians under its relocation scheme.

● G7: phase out fossil fuels

At the G7 summit in Bavaria, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and US agreed there should be a “decarbonisation of the global economy over the course of this century”. The statement, from some of the countries with the greatest historical responsibility for carbon emissions, is seen as an important commitment ahead of the UN climate conference in December.

● SDGs zero draft

After years of consultations, the first official draft of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the international community’s new development framework – was released in June. With 17 goals and 169 targets, NGOs have welcomed the framework’s scope and vision, but expressed concerns about financing and implementation.

Women’s groups, instrumental in securing prominent inclusion of women’s rights in the text, fear this language may be traded away in negotiations.

● Saudi moves on women’s vote

In May, Saudi Arabia drafted legislation to permit women to vote and stand as candidates for the first time in municipal elections from December. The country is the only UN member state that does not have female suffrage.

● LGBT rights: slow progress

According to a new UN report, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people continue to face discrimination and violence around the world. Despite progress, including the approval of same-



“This year the UN marks its 70th anniversary. Sadly, there is little time for reflection or celebration. More pressing are the competing demands and challenges fuelled by an upsurge in conflict, disease and human suffering ... the international community must rise to the moment”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, 2015

sex marriage in 19 countries, homosexuality is still criminalised in 77 states and punishable by death in Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen, and in some parts of Nigeria and Somalia.

● NPT fails to agree outcome

In May, the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference failed to agree an outcome document – a reflection of the growing divide between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. At the conference, Japan’s attempt to invite leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki was blocked.

● UN turns 70

On 24 October, the UN will mark its 70th anniversary. This year, the UN is set to take major decisions on sustainable development and climate change. It is also reviewing its peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called 2015 “a crucial year for humanity”.

2015: time to invest in our global system

Overstretched and under-funded, the UN is still going strong 70 years after it was founded. It is we, states and citizens, who need to do more

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Chairman, and Natalie Samarasinghe, Executive Director, UNA-UK

In 1945, the founding of the UN raised hopes for a new era of peace and prosperity. 70 years on, this prospect looks endangered. A confluence of crises is driving instability across the world. Exacerbated by long-term challenges like climate change, financial debt and inequality, conflicts have erupted and millions have been displaced.

Our interdependence has boosted opportunities for trade and travel as well as our vulnerability to shocks, from bank defaults to disease outbreaks. It has also reduced the ability of our governments to tackle traditionally domestic issues like fiscal balances and job creation. As a result, many of us have narrowed our horizons, becoming more fiercely local, discriminatory and, at the extreme, violent.

The UN is struggling to deal with this grim picture. On the ground, it is working wonders to feed, shelter and protect millions of people. But funding shortfalls have forced it to scale back its efforts in recent months, reducing food aid to Syrian refugees and closing health clinics in Iraq. And political leadership on the hardest issues has been in short supply.

At the policy level, it is working to improve the international community's ability – and appetite – to tackle these challenges. Preoccupied with problems at home, governments have been reluctant to produce the global solutions needed. Big power relations have soured, compounding this leadership deficit.

Has the UN failed in its quest for progress? Have its efforts over the past seven decades amounted to no more than a sticking plaster on the world's sores?

Despite the horrific headlines we see every day, the world has become a better place by almost every objective

measure (environmental issues are the big exception). The number of inter-state conflicts has steadily declined since 1945. Conflict-related deaths, including from civil wars, have plummeted. In the 2000s, the average annual death toll from warfare was a third of what it was during the Cold War. This decade's brutal outbursts of violence have not disrupted this downward trend.

Most people today live longer, healthier lives. Globally, life expectancy, education, health, income and living standards have improved by 18 per cent over the past 20 years. The world is also freer. In 1945, almost a third of its people lived in territories that were not self-governing. Since then, over 80 countries have gained independence. The vast majority of states have accepted international human rights laws. Technology has empowered individuals and civil society movements.

Have the UN's efforts over the past seven decades amounted to no more than a sticking plaster on the world's sores?

The extent to which the UN deserves credit for these developments is debated. Economic growth in China has had a great impact on reducing global poverty. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence has probably helped to prevent big power conflict. But there are areas where the UN's impact is obvious, from the promotion of dialogue between adversaries, to the eradication of smallpox (see page 20), and to the system of international agreements



UN flag flies at half-mast outside Secretariat
© UN Photo/Mark Garten

that now governs almost every aspect of human endeavour and planetary resource.

On the ground, UN success has depended on clear, achievable mandates. Targeted development campaigns, on maternal and infant health and on school enrolment for instance, have worked. Those seeking broader social transformation, not least on gender equality, have some way to go. Peacekeeping missions have been most effective in smaller countries like Lebanon and Sierra Leone, especially when big powers show sustained interest.

At the highest political levels, the UN has fostered the concept of an “international community”, expected to solve problems peacefully, to cooperate on shared challenges and to take action to prevent atrocities. This idea has gained wide acceptance amongst global citizens, who want their governments to abide by shared international standards.

But success depends heavily on states' willingness to work together. What we are witnessing now is the fading effect of the UN's guiding principles in restraining nationalistic ambitions. The refusal of Putin's Russia to follow UN norms in the Ukraine crisis is more than a straw in the wind. Up to now, Moscow had almost without exception been careful to respect the letter of its international commitments because it believed the UN system constrained the West. The sagas of Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, and the eastward expansion of NATO, have soured this belief and provoked the Kremlin into a more brutal game of power projection.

The perception that international power structures are frozen in an outdated compromise is also damaging the UN. This perception is not entirely accurate. The five permanent members of the Security Council, for

example, still rank in the top six for global firepower and have the same collective share of GDP today as they did in 1945, though the division between them has changed. But to an objective observer it seems justified, particularly in the financial institutions and in the expressions of international behaviour. The New Development Bank set up by the BRICS countries is a non-violent manifestation of this discontent.

Our long period of global peace will not endure unless governments consciously will it to last. The UN has instilled habits between capitals of talking, debating, arguing and resolving that have a very real value. But it has also reinforced the authority of sovereign states within their own territories. And, as always in human affairs, the politics of holding on to power trumps everything else, including the search for collective solutions to global problems as serious as climate change, regional conflict and resource competition.

The stark truth is that international compromises, of the kind that made the establishment of the UN possible in 1945, still appear too costly when measured by the familiar criterion of national interest. In that respect, the patterns of polarised thinking that led to the breakdown of relationships in the decade before the First World War are starting to be recognisable again.

This time the world has institutions, practices and early-warning systems in place to encourage more far-sighted policy-making. Political leadership, however, remains trapped in national agendas, or smaller. Unless that changes, unless governments – and the publics to whom they are accountable – embrace the need to use and refresh those institutions, we will have learnt nothing from the previous, and finite, eras of peace. ●

Reforming the UN

There is no silver bullet for UN reform but a better way to select the Secretary-General comes close

How can we make the UN work better? The short answer: political will. It is the UN's member states that call the shots, setting the Organization's priorities and budget. If they chose to, they could look beyond narrow national interests and give the UN the authority and resources it needs to serve the long-term interests of the world.

This is a big "if", seemingly so insurmountable that typical answers to this question focus on the UN's structures, not its members' policies, notably enlargement of the Security Council. While more representation would add to its legitimacy – an important consideration – a larger membership may not make the Council more effective or progressive, if the voting records of regional powers, the likely candidates for new seats, are a guide.

Readers may disagree. In any case, however desirable the reform, the debate remains academic. Member states cannot agree on what a new Council should look like. Even if they could, changing the Council's composition requires amendment of the UN Charter, which in turn needs the backing of its five permanent members (P5). They are in no rush to do so.

Small but mighty

A smaller reform, which doesn't require Charter amendment, could have more immediate impact: a better way to select the UN Secretary-General. The next appointment is due in 2016.

Changing a recruitment process may not sound transformative, particularly for a role described by the Charter as "administrative". But improving this one would have great practical and symbolic value.

In 1952, Trygve Lie, the post's first incumbent, resigned. The USSR had turned on him after he backed UN action against North Korea. The US, meanwhile,

had begun to hunt for communist spies at UN headquarters. He thought his position untenable. In his valedictory, he spoke of states' duty to leave no door unopened in seeking to use the UN's resources for peace, noting that one such door, the office of the Secretary-General, had been closed and "not because of me".

Lie's words capture the perils and potential of the role. To be effective, Secretaries-General must maintain the support of member states, particularly the big powers. But if this balancing act is achieved, they can manoeuvre within the parameters of politics and the Charter to great effect.

One for seven billion

From the outset, states recognised that the Secretary-General would be more than an administrator. The 1945 UN Preparatory Commission noted: "The Secretary-General, more than anyone else, will stand for the United Nations as a whole. In the eyes of the world ... he must embody the principles and ideals of the Charter."

The Secretary-General is a voice for the poor and marginalised, a voice that can transcend national interest. By carving out positions distinct from member states, he or she can preserve the UN as a symbol of hope.

The Secretary-General can enhance the UN's impact across the board: coordinating efforts to tackle cross-border challenges; encouraging action on situations that lack big-power interest; making smart appointments to key UN positions; pioneering norms; and building partnerships.

Peacekeeping, for example, was developed by Lie and his successor, Dag Hammarskjöld, who also expanded the Secretary-General's "good offices" function. In 1955, he secured the release of 11 US airmen

imprisoned in China. U Thant, appointed after Hammarskjöld's death, played a significant role in de-escalating the Cuban Missile Crisis.

More recently, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General from 1997 to 2006, brokered a groundbreaking – and life-saving – deal with pharmaceutical companies to widen access to HIV/AIDS treatment. He is also credited for his advocacy of the "responsibility to protect" norm. Ban Ki-moon, the current postholder, has used the Secretary-General's moral authority and convening power to champion LGBT rights and action on climate change.

Crucially, Secretaries-General can also play a pivotal role in preventing conflict and atrocities. The Charter enables them to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that may threaten peace and security. Their ability to do so would be enormously strengthened by a selection process that gives them a real mandate to act.

P5 stranglehold

The Charter deals with the process in one sentence: "The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." That both bodies play a formal role in the appointment is sensible, reflecting the realities of the Secretary-General's operating context. But informal practices have skewed this balance, relegating the Assembly's role to one of rubberstamping and increasing the P5 stranglehold.

Initially, proposals were made for the Council to put forward candidates for the Assembly to vote on by secret ballot. In its first session, however, the Assembly curtailed its own role, stating it would be desirable for the Council to proffer only one candidate and for debate in the Assembly to be avoided.

Current practice takes this to the extreme. There are virtually no established rules or criteria for the appointment. The Council makes its decision behind closed doors, sometimes before the wider UN membership knows who's in the running. Even states elected to the Council are not in control. Agreement is usually the result of secret bargaining among the P5, a process that includes extracting promises from candidates, on positions in the Secretariat, for example.

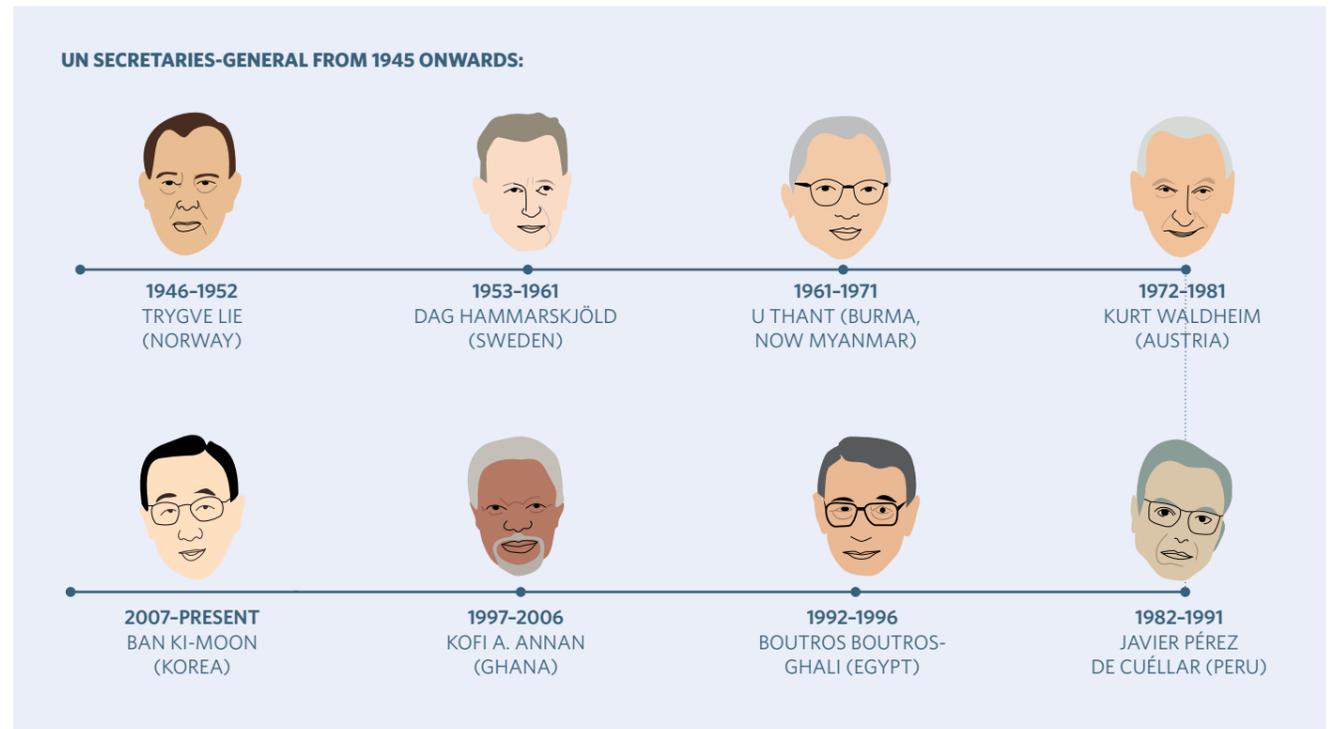
Since 1997, states' insistence on geographic rotation has restricted the talent pool to candidates from particular regions. The Eastern European Group is now asserting its claim. And no woman has ever been seriously considered for the role. Just three of 31 formal candidates in past elections have been women.

As it stands, the process is seriously deficient, out of step with modern recruitment practices and contrary to the UN's principles of good governance. Above all, it is geared to selecting someone unlikely to rock the P5's boat. While incumbents have managed to prove them wrong, imagine what more could be achieved if the process actively encouraged bold and visionary candidates.

What could be

A process that engages all states – and civil society – would give future Secretaries-General a stronger mandate. This would boost their ability to mobilise support for, and drive forward, the UN's agenda.

A single term of office would further strengthen their hand, providing them with the political space to develop a long-term agenda. Freed from the constraints of seeking re-election, the Secretary-General would be in a better position to insist states take action to prevent conflict and atrocities, and to resist states when they ask the UN to take on poorly-resourced tasks or poorly-qualified



candidates for senior UN positions. He or she might feel more able to say "no".

Last year, UNA-UK co-founded 1 for 7 Billion, a global movement of over 170 million people calling for a better process. The campaign's proposals have widespread and long-standing support from member states (see box).

A chance for change

Over 150 states have called for change ahead of the next appointment. Most gratifying for UNA-UK, the UK has taken up this issue within the P5. It has called for a process open to all member states, as well as civil society. The Non-Aligned Movement and the ACT grouping of reformed-focussed states have put forward concrete proposals, such as hearings with candidates. There is also support for a single term for postholders.

This momentum has resulted in pushback. Of all the things the US and Russia should be working on, they seem to be coordinating their opposition in the Security Council. Their attitude is short-sighted. The reforms on the table do not take away the Council's role in the decision, nor the P5's ability to veto candidates. They would simply inject some transparency into the process, helping to restore a modicum of confidence in the power structure the two countries are seeking to preserve.

In any case, they may find it difficult to prevent change. There is much the General Assembly could do

without Council blessing. It could set out a timetable for the appointment and organise hearings with candidates. It could also request a public shortlist.

Secrecy, already fraying at the time of the last appointment in 2006, when candidates created websites and gave interviews, is near impossible today. Other bodies, such as the World Trade Organization, post CVs and vision statements on their websites. The International Labour Organization uses a video link so hearings can be observed.

And the Assembly could ask to be given a real choice, with more than one candidate put forward by the Council. It has taken decisive action in the past, for example, proposing Thant to fill Hammarskjöld's unexpired term, when the US and USSR were unable to agree on a candidate. Again, other parts of the UN system provide an example: the World Health Organization Board is asked to nominate three candidates for the Health Assembly to consider, unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

There is no silver bullet for UN reform, but a better way to select the Secretary-General comes close. It would signal that the UN is capable of change and give the wider UN membership a more meaningful role.

In this 70th anniversary year, the need for the UN is greater than at any time since the Second World War. States must use this opportunity to enhance its effectiveness and credibility, and reaffirm its global authority and popular appeal. ●



FAIR. OPEN. INCLUSIVE.

A new UN chief will be appointed in 2016. She or he will play a crucial role in finding global solutions and improving the lives of the world's seven billion people. But the current appointment process is secretive, outdated and wholly unsuited to finding the best person for the job.

WHY IT'S NOT WORKING

- There is no job description, timetable or public scrutiny
- There is a troubling history of backroom deals
- No woman has ever been seriously considered
- The Security Council dominates the process, presenting – subject to veto by its permanent members – a single candidate for the rest of the UN to rubberstamp

WHAT WE WANT

- Formal selection criteria
- A clear timetable with deadlines

- A public shortlist of qualified women and men
- Open hearings with candidates
- A real choice for the UN membership
- A real mandate for the next Secretary-General, free from promises and electioneering

These proposals don't require amendment of the UN Charter. They enjoy widespread support from states, opinion leaders and civil society. Most of them have already been endorsed by the UN's membership. They just haven't been implemented.

The world deserves better. We need a fair, open, inclusive and – above all – merit-based process that allows all states to select from the world's most competent men and women. And with your help, we can get there.

Help us #FindTheBestUNLeader: 1for7billion.org

THE UNITED NATIONS OUR GLOBAL ORGANIZATION

Aims

- Maintain international peace and security
- Promote sustainable development
- Protect human rights
- Uphold international law
- Provide humanitarian assistance
- Facilitate global cooperation



Facts and figures

- **Description:** an international organisation with **193** member states
- **Birthday:** **24 October 1945**, date on which the UN Charter came into force
- **Employees:** **85,000**, fewer than global companies such as McDonald's
- **Peacekeepers:** over **125,000** contributed by **120** countries to serve in **16** missions
- **Cost:** **\$30bn** a year, less than UK households spent on Christmas in 2014
- **Locations:** headquarters in New York; centres in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna; and offices in over 190 countries

- Provides food to 90 million people in 80 countries
- Vaccinates 58 per cent of the world's children, saving 3 million lives a year
- Assists over 38.7 million refugees and people fleeing war, famine or persecution
- Works with 193 countries to combat climate change and make development sustainable
- Keeps peace with over 125,000 peacekeepers in 16 operations in four continents
- Fights poverty, helping improve the health and well-being of 420 million rural poor
- Protects and promotes human rights on site and through some 80 treaties/declarations
- Mobilises \$22 billion in humanitarian aid to help people affected by emergencies
- Uses diplomacy to prevent conflict: assists some 60 countries a year with their elections
- Promotes maternal health, saving the lives of 30 million women a year



In our rapidly changing world, the UN remains humankind's invaluable instrument of common progress. Let us use this anniversary to reflect on the lessons of seven decades, and reaffirm our commitment to serve "we the peoples" and build lives of prosperity, security and dignity for all.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon



The United Nations Association – UK is the leading advocate for UK action at the UN, a critical friend to the Organization and a nationwide movement of global citizens.

To find out more and support our work, visit www.una.org.uk

THE UNITED NATIONS:

WORKING FOR US ALL

The world's most pressing challenges – from climate change to terrorism – affect us all. They require global solutions reached through negotiation and compromise. The UN enables states to face these challenges together. By working through it, no country need shoulder the burden or cost of tackling them alone.

Everyone benefits from the UN's work. It has a profound impact on our daily lives, from promoting labour rights and aviation standards to clearing landmines and conserving fish stocks. It stands for the world's seven billion people, giving voice to our hopes and needs, and helping to create a better future for us all.

THE UN SYSTEM

Principal organs

- General Assembly**
 The UN's main deliberative body, where all states, large and small, rich and poor, have one vote. Its decisions are not legally binding but represent the weight of world opinion.
- Security Council**
 Responsible for maintaining peace. It can authorise sanctions, peacekeeping missions and the use of force. It has 15 members. 10 are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Five are permanent and can veto any major proposal: China, France, Russia, the UK and US.
- Economic and Social Council**
 The body tasked with coordinating and producing recommendations on the UN's work on economic, social and environmental issues.
- Trusteeship Council**
 Set up to facilitate decolonisation by supervising "trust territories". It suspended operations in 1994 when the last territory, Palau, became independent.
- International Court of Justice**
 The UN's principal judicial body, tasked with settling legal disputes between states and issuing advisory opinions. It is the only principal organ located outside New York, in The Hague.
- Secretariat**
 The UN's staff members, led by the Secretary-General. This international civil service carries out the day-to-day work of the UN.

Funds and programmes

The funds and programmes have evolved over time in response to different needs and situations. Many of them provide life-saving services, in addition to advising governments. They are financed through voluntary contributions and have their own staff and governing boards.



Specialised agencies

The specialised agencies are autonomous organisations that work with the UN but are distinct from it. They provide technical assistance, research and expertise on particular areas of the UN's work. Some, such as the Universal Postal Union, existed before the First World War. Some, for example, the International Labour Organization, were associated with the League of Nations, the UN's predecessor. Others were founded almost simultaneously with the UN, the World Bank for instance. Others still were created by the UN to meet emerging needs. The International Fund for Agricultural Development is an example.



Other entities

These bodies were created to coordinate and support UN action in certain fields.



People's movement

The World Federation of UNAs is a global non-profit organisation with a membership of over 100 national United Nations Associations, of which UNA-UK is one. WFUNA works to strengthen the UN by engaging global citizens around the world.



Related organisations

Established by separate treaties or negotiations, these organisations maintain a working relationship with the UN system.



The United Nations Association - UK provides independent information and analysis on the UN's work and campaigns for its objectives to be realised. To find out more visit www.una.org.uk

SUPPORT YOUR UNITED NATIONS

*The UN was created in our name.
It gives voice to our hopes and helps our governments to look after our needs.
It aspires to build a better future for us all.*

This year, world leaders could change the course of history. States have the chance to adopt new development goals and a global climate agreement. We need to remind our governments that the UN is essential to realising these opportunities.

The UN's 70th anniversary is our chance to stand up for our United Nations.

We must show our governments that we care about the UN; that we want them to support it and make it more effective; and that we want them to use it to find the global solutions we need.

In the lead-up to 24 October – the date on which the UN Charter came into force 70 years ago – UNA-UK will be running campaigns and events to help you take action, online and in your community.

We will:

- Call on you to petition the UK on its UN policies
- Invite you to celebrate UN70 in London
- Seek your nominations for the next UN Secretary-General
- Ask you to make a pledge of support
- Collect your local United Nations histories
- Challenge you to get the UN Charter into your school, workplace or town hall



The UN by decade: our story

This photo feature presents the UN's history through the eyes of "we the peoples" – human beings from all walks of life

1940s

*"I remember being hungry. I bit my uncle's hand and he cried, not because it hurt, but because I was hungry"**

Michael Pupa's parents and sister were murdered by the Nazis in 1942. He spent the next two years hiding in the Polish woods with his uncle. After the war, they ended up in a camp for displaced persons (DPs) run by the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).

Set up in 1943, UNRRA was soon dealing with a crisis of over 50 million DPs in Europe. The reluctance of the Allies to take in DPs meant that UNRRA prioritised repatriation, helping seven million people to return home between May and September 1945. But its operations became increasingly controversial, particularly among Jewish and eastern European DPs who did not wish to return.

Repatriation became a major political issue in the fledgling UN: should people have the right to choose where they live and to flee oppression? As a result, a temporary International Refugee Organization (IRO) was created in 1947 with a mandate encompassing repatriation, care and assistance, legal and political protection and resettlement. But support for DPs remained precarious. The

IRO's public information office records speak about the need to "sell" the idea that DPs will make good citizens.

Michael's paper trail starts with his arrival in the US zone in Germany in April 1946. He is listed as being "shipped by truck" from the UNRRA camp in Berlin-Zehlendorf to one in Eschwega. The next official record appears in February 1948, when the IRO registers him. He was transferred twice a year later. In 1950, his uncle asked for him to be placed under IRO care.

Among DPs, unaccompanied displaced children were the hardest to resettle. However, Michael was assigned an IRO caseworker and recommended for "resettlement and adoption" in the US. In May 1951, he flew to New York. After spending six months in a UN home, he was placed with foster parents in Cleveland, Ohio, where he settled. Speaking to a local newspaper in 2013, Michael said of his six years in camps: "I learned to be a strong person. I had to be. And I learned that there are good people and bad people in the world. Some people are willing to help, and some don't want to take the time."

New crises, from eastern Europe to India/Pakistan, showed the ongoing need for a refugee agency. European and Asian states wanted to create a stronger, permanent agency. The US and Soviet Union favoured a



Image from Home for the Homeless, an IRO film from April 1950

strictly defined temporary agency. A compromise was reached. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) was founded in 1951 with a three-year mandate to provide international protection for refugees (defined by a new refugee convention) and to seek permanent solutions for their situation. In 1954, it won the first of two Nobel Peace Prizes. It remains one of the UN's most important frontline agencies.

*Michael Pupa's story and quotes – US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Oral History, 15 June 2010

MILESTONES



Support your United Nations: www.una.org.uk/UN70

1950s

*“For years, Africa has been the footstool of colonialism and imperialism, exploitation and degradation. From the north to the south, from the east to the west, her sons languished in the chains of slavery and humiliation, and Africa’s exploiters and self-appointed controllers of her destiny strode across our land with incredible inhumanity without mercy, without shame, and without honour. Those days are gone and gone forever, and now I, an African, stand before this august Assembly of the United Nations and speak with a voice of peace and freedom, proclaiming to the world the dawn of a new era ... There are now twenty-two of us in this Assembly and there are yet more to come”**

When the UN was created, almost a third of the world’s population – some 750 million people – lived in territories that were not self-governing. Since then, over 80 countries have gained independence, radically changing the make-up of the UN and the international community.

Between 1950 and 1960, the year in which Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, delivered this speech, 41 countries joined the UN. The majority were former colonies. During this period, the UN became a platform for those campaigning against colonial oppression, including apartheid.

South Africa featured in the very first session of the UN General Assembly. In 1950, the Assembly adopted a resolution stating

that “racial segregation was necessarily based on doctrines of racial discrimination”, and from 1952 the “question of race conflict in South Africa” began to appear on its agenda every year.

The UN Charter includes a commitment to “develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions”. It also created a Trusteeship Council to monitor certain territories, including those held under mandates established by the UN’s predecessor, the League of Nations – such as Samoa; and those separated from countries defeated in the Second World War, such as Somalia. 11 territories were placed under this system.



Ghana independence ceremony, March 1957
© Mark Kauffman/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images

In 1994, the Council suspended operation after the last of the 11, Palau, became independent.

That year, South Africa’s first democratically elected government took office. After four decades of pressure, including arms embargoes and sporting boycotts, the General Assembly removed the item of apartheid from its agenda.

Despite this progress, the UN does not consider its task to be complete. At present, there are still 17 non-self-governing territories, home to nearly two million people. Through the Special Committee on Decolonization, the UN continues to advocate for their rights and interests.

*Extract from speech by Kwame Nkrumah to the UN General Assembly, 23 September 1960

1960s

With increasing numbers of newly independent countries, development moved centre stage at the UN. In September 1961, John F. Kennedy launched a proposal for a ‘UN Development Decade’. Soon afterwards, the 1960s were designated as a decade of progress and social advancement.

Collectively, developing countries were to accelerate their growth rate by at least five per cent by 1970. To support this goal, developed countries were to pursue policies that would help increase trade and resource flows. There was growing acceptance that rich countries should allocate a percentage of their Gross National Income to development assistance. The UN endorsed a target of 0.7 per cent in 1970.

While economic growth was central to the development decade, it was part of a broader agenda of transformation. The World Food Programme was created in 1961, the Research Institute for Social Development in 1963, the Conference on Trade and Development in 1964 and the Industrial Development Organization in 1966.

For the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which grew out of the wartime UNRRA programme, the 1960s were a major turning point. It conducted a mass survey on the needs of children worldwide. The resulting report argued that they should be prioritised in development plans, and that they were crucial to building a country’s human capital. This meant addressing children’s intellectual and psychosocial needs, as well as their physical well-being. The document had major implications for UNICEF, which

*“I can testify to what UNICEF means to children, because I was among those who received food and medical relief right after World War II ... People in these places don’t know Audrey Hepburn, but they recognise the name UNICEF. When they see UNICEF their faces light up, because they know that something is happening. In the Sudan, for example, they call a water pump UNICEF”**



© UN Photo/TimMcKulka

began to function as a development, as well as a humanitarian agency.

UNICEF’s water programme in India encapsulates this dual approach. When drought hit India in 1966–7, UNICEF responded by airlifting pneumatic drilling rigs into the country to access underground water tables. It then worked with local mechanics to develop durable, affordable water pumps. These pumps were mass-produced and distributed around the country. By the 1990s, more than one million had

been installed across Asia, Africa and Latin America, giving unprecedented numbers of people a reliable supply of water for drinking, cooking and washing.

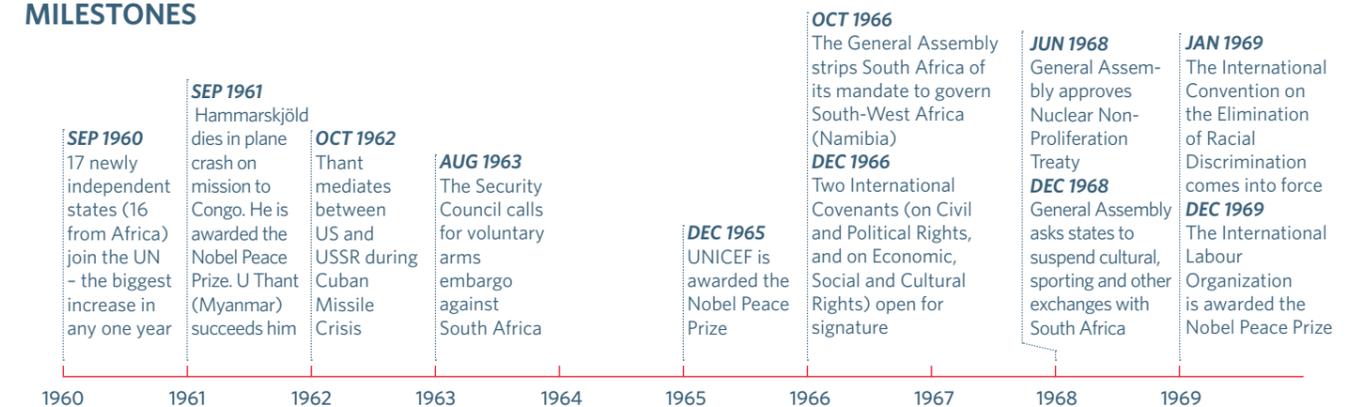
Actress Audrey Hepburn supported UNICEF in the 1950s and 60s, later serving as Goodwill Ambassador. She spoke of her work as a means to repay the UN for rescuing her from starvation in 1945.

*Audrey Hepburn speaking about her work with UNICEF in various interviews – www.unicef.org

MILESTONES



MILESTONES



1970s



© UN Photo/B Wolff

When the UN was founded, smallpox was one of the world's biggest killers, ranking alongside malaria and tuberculosis. It claimed some two million lives a year in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with five times as many people infected.

In 1966, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a Smallpox Eradication Programme – a mass vaccination campaign using new technology, freeze-dried vaccines, to allow for longer storage and transportation. As the WHO had only 150 professionals to dedicate to some 50 countries, it built strong partnerships with governments and local people, enlisting their support not just for the process of vaccination, but also in how best to reach remote and reluctant communities.

By the early 1970s, smallpox was in retreat. The WHO embarked on a surveillance containment strategy, sending flying squad teams where cases were discovered. In 1975, just

*“I was scared of being vaccinated then. It looked like the shot hurt. Now when I meet parents who refuse to give their children the polio vaccine, I tell them my story. I tell them how important these vaccines are. I tell them not to do something foolish like me”**

three countries still had cases: Bangladesh, India and Ethiopia. When the last cases were finally reported, it was discovered that nomads had carried the disease from Ethiopia to Somalia, where an epidemic broke out.

Ali Maow Maalin was the last person in the world to be infected with naturally occurring smallpox. In 1977, he was 23 and working as a hospital cook near Mogadishu, supporting the smallpox containment effort. He caught the disease whilst driving an infected family to a clinic.

He was initially diagnosed with chickenpox, as all staff had received a smallpox vaccination. But fearful of the shot, Maalin had only pretended to be vaccinated. As a result, he was sent home and came into contact with 91 people, leading the WHO to undertake a massive intervention to prevent the disease from re-spreading. Three years later, Somalia, and the world, were smallpox-free. The WHO intervention cost about \$300m, the equivalent of three fighter bombers at the time. It has saved an estimated \$2bn a year.

After recovering, Maalin dedicated his life to battling polio, working in some of the most unstable areas in Somalia. In 2004, he officially became a polio vaccinator, going door-to-door convincing families the vaccine was safe. According to Dr Debesay Mulugeta of WHO Somalia, Maalin would say: “I’m the last smallpox case in the world. I want to help ensure my country will not be last in stopping polio.” Somalia was declared polio-free in 2007. Worldwide, polio was endemic to just three countries at that time: Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan.

In 2013, Maalin died of malaria, aged 59. World health leaders praised him as an “inspiration”. Later that year, polio resurfaced in Somalia and Syria.

**Ali Maow Maalin story and quotes - “Polio: a fight in a lawless land”, Boston Globe, 27 February 2006, and www.who.int*

MILESTONES



1980s

*“The United Nations was for us a refuge ... We could come here and people would listen to us and we would be understood. And that friendship, that comprehension, that support has been of the utmost importance to us”**

The term “human rights” appears seven times in the UN Charter, making the promotion and protection of human rights a priority for the Organization. In 1948, it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a “common standard” for all peoples and nations. The Declaration became the cornerstone of the international human rights regime, which today includes legally-binding treaties and monitoring mechanisms, an intergovernmental human rights forum, independent experts and a dedicated UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In its first decades, governments were keen to portray human rights as domestic matters.

As a result, the UN’s work was largely confined to standard-setting. The only situations that received widespread condemnation were South Africa and Israel-Palestine. It was not until the 1973 coup in Chile and its bloody aftermath that the UN began to pursue human rights violations more aggressively, through naming and shaming and on-site investigations, for example.

In the 1980s, this work expanded massively, with an increasing number of countries subjected to increasingly intrusive procedures. In February 1980, the UN established the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the first such



One of the mothers of the disappeared looks at a banner with photos of the victims
© Ali Burafi/AFP/Getty Images

body to have a universal mandate. In December 1984, the Convention against Torture was adopted, the first human rights treaty to apply the principle of universal jurisdiction. And in November 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was agreed, the first legally-binding instrument to encompass the whole spectrum of human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural.

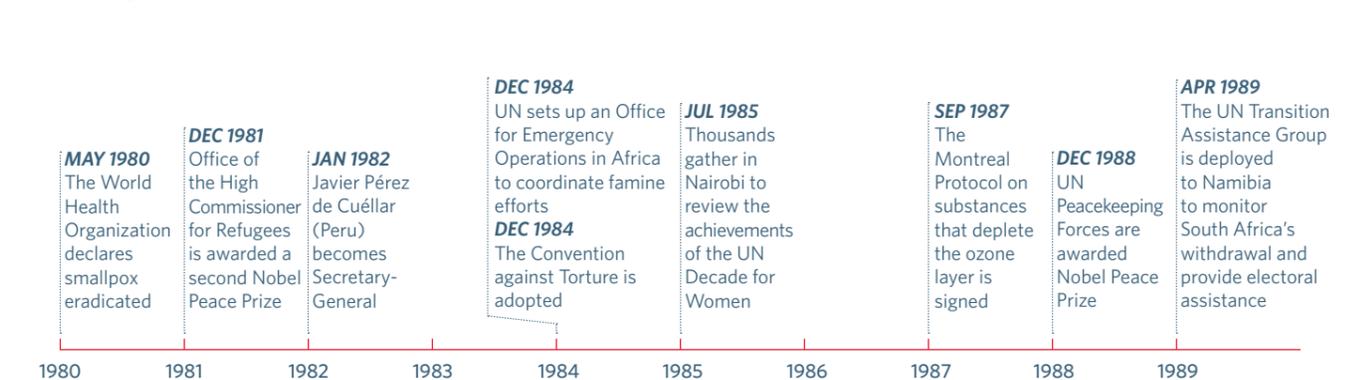
The UN also began to involve NGOs and victims more systematically in its human rights work. Estela de Carlotto, head of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, is one such campaigner.

Her grandson was born in 1978 during her daughter’s detention by Argentina’s military dictatorship. She was informed that her daughter had been killed but the fate of her grandson was not revealed. An estimated 500 children disappeared during the “dirty war” – part of a systematic plan to prevent the raising of another generation of “subversives”.

The Grandmothers group was founded in 1977. They continue to search tirelessly for their missing grandchildren and have now found over 100. Estela’s own grandson was finally located in 2014. Speaking at the UN later that year, she thanked the Organization for standing with the Grandmothers for over 30 years, and for walking with them as they moved from a group of inexperienced laywomen to a sophisticated NGO that provides legal and psychological assistance to victims of enforced disappearances.

**Estela de Carlotto, head of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, speaking at the UN in 2014*

MILESTONES



1990s

The world's 370 million indigenous peoples make up five per cent of the global population but 15 per cent of the world's poor. They suffer markedly higher rates of landlessness, malnutrition and displacement, and have lower levels of literacy and access to health services. They are also among the first to face the direct consequences of climate change.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the UN looked set to make great strides towards addressing these issues. In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its first major scientific assessment. Two years later, an unprecedented number of world leaders and NGOs headed to Rio de Janeiro for the UN Earth Summit. The Summit led to the creation of three major conventions, on climate change, biodiversity and desertification, and eventually to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the first international agreement to set binding emission reduction targets for developed states.

Action on indigenous issues was also gathering steam. The General Assembly declared 1993 to be the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, and the first International Decade began in 1995. After several years of work, the first draft of a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was completed, and discussions were held on establishing a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, eventually created in 2000.

In the new millennium, progress slowed. It was only in 2007 that the General Assembly finally adopted the Declaration. It is not binding on states but four countries with substantial indigenous populations



Kazakh shepherd riding a horse
© UN Photo/F. Charton

*"The Earth is the root and the source of our culture. She keeps our memories, she receives our ancestors and she therefore demands that we honour her ... We have to take care of her so that our children and grandchildren may continue to benefit from her. If the world does not learn now to show respect to nature, what kind of future will the new generations have?"**

– Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US – still voted against it. The Kyoto Protocol did not enter into force until 2005 and efforts to negotiate a successor agreement ended in disarray at the end of the decade. Today, prospects for the 2015 UN climate conference are more promising and the Declaration's opponents have reversed their position. But the journey from agreement to implementation will be long.

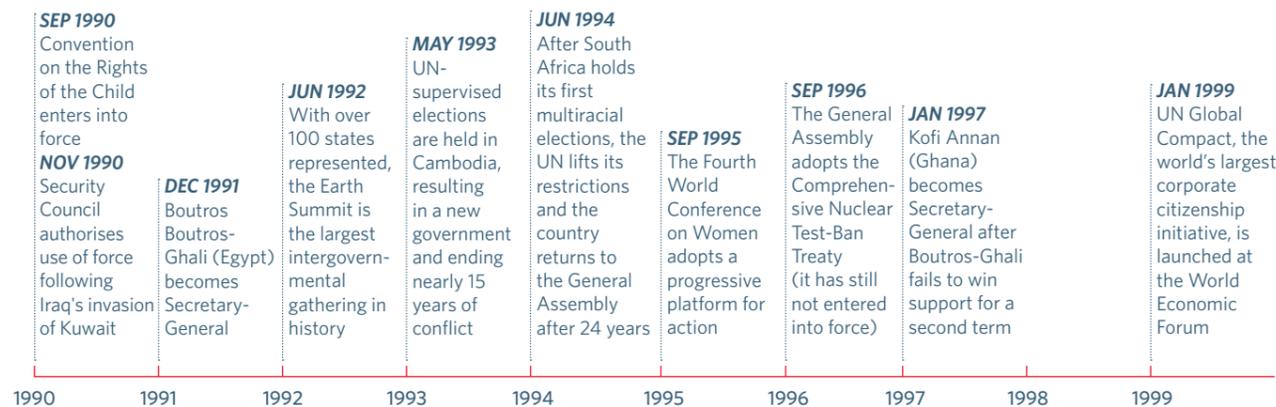
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, a Quiché Mayan, has been at the forefront of indigenous rights and environmental activism for three decades.

Her village in Guatemala was one of several hundred that was levelled to the ground in the 1970s. Her father, who was active in the Committee of the Peasant Union, was murdered; her mother and brother were tortured.

In response, Rigoberta became a campaigner. She was one of the first indigenous delegates to the UN and a member of the working group that drafted the Declaration. Later she served as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. In 1992, she was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. Her fight continues.

*Rigoberta Menchú, Nobel Lecture, 10 December 1992

MILESTONES



2000s

*"My troops become role models for the local girls"**

In 2007, Seema Dhundia became commander of the first all-female UN peacekeeping unit, deployed to Liberia. "My father was a civilian officer in the Army Service Corps. My brother is a navy pilot. When I was a kid, I got such a kick out of the uniforms, I wanted one too. When I was 20, I got the chance ... I did a year of extensive training, learning drills, and weapons handling. Then I joined India's first female battalion. [20 years later] when I was chosen to lead a force of hundreds of women in Liberia, it was an unusual posting. I thought: now I am going to prove myself."

The Indian unit has helped to cut crime rates through patrolling and has mentored local officers, still treated with suspicion following police participation in Liberia's civil war. The conflict lasted 14 years and claimed over 200,000 lives. UN peacekeepers have been there since 1993.

UN peacekeeping evolved at a time when Cold War rivalries stymied action by the Security Council. With the exception of the 1960 UN Operation in the Congo, early missions were relatively small and focused on monitoring ceasefires.

The end of the Cold War radically changed UN peacekeeping. With a new sense of unity and purpose, the Council authorised 20 operations between 1989 and 1994, raising the number of peacekeepers from 11,000 to 75,000.

The nature of the operations also shifted dramatically. Peacekeepers were now given a wide range of tasks, from disarming former

combatants to monitoring human rights abuses. Police officers and civilians were deployed in larger numbers.

Successful missions, such as Namibia, raised expectations for UN peacekeeping beyond its capacity to deliver. Serious failures followed – in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia – where the UN lacked the mandate and resources to protect lives. In Rwanda and Srebrenica, mass atrocities happened on its watch. Worse still, UN peacekeepers were implicated in sexual violence.

Despite these setbacks, UN peacekeeping has continued to expand to address a growing number of crises. Today, over 125,000 peacekeepers serve in 16 missions worldwide. The UN has also done much to address its shortcomings. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the UN intervention brigade was mandated to neutralise armed

groups to better protect civilians. And the UN is working with troop-contributing countries to raise training standards.

Seema thinks the deployment of female peacekeepers is crucial to this effort. "I believe we will see fewer cases of abuse since we understand the issues affecting women and children – two thirds of my peacekeepers are mothers. Also, women generate confidence among the local population ... I think we've inspired the local women, too; now they are joining the national police force."

In 2000, Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security called for more female peacekeepers. They now make up three per cent of military personnel and 10 per cent of police officers. There is still a long way to go.

*Seema Dhundia story and quotes – www.unwomen.org and interview with Marie Claire, 31 May 2007



Tara Yonjan, vehicle mechanic, with colleagues from the Nepalese contingent in Lebanon
© UN Photo/Pasqual Gorritz

MILESTONES



*"We humanitarians can no longer clean up the mess. Someone has to stop it from happening in the first place"**

70 years after the UN was created, the world is facing challenges that its founders could not have conceived, such as climate change and cyber warfare. But arguably the biggest problem it must confront is the same now as it was then: displacement.

In 2015, the number of displaced persons rose to nearly 60 million – more than at any time since records began. Recent conflicts in Syria and South Sudan, for example, have forced millions to flee their homes, while longstanding emergencies, such as those in Afghanistan and Somalia, continue to cause massive displacement. Other factors, from poverty to water scarcity, are also uprooting people.

Most of those displaced stay within their own borders. Last year, the number of internally displaced people was a staggering 38 million. Nearly 90 per cent of those who do cross borders live in developing countries, often neighbouring states. Lebanon, for example, has taken in a quarter of Syria's four million refugees. A quarter of its population is now Syrian. Ethiopia is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa,

with some 200,000 from South Sudan alone. After their "Arab Spring" upheavals, Tunisia and Egypt have received the bulk of Libyans fleeing the country.

Since 1951, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has helped millions of people to restart their lives. Today, it provides assistance to more than 46 million people in 123 countries. But it has repeatedly warned that this work is not sustainable. António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, has said that while global humanitarian funding is higher than ever, it has not kept pace with growing needs. Increasingly, humanitarian actors are serving as substitutes for structural assistance and humanitarian funding is being stretched to cover things it should not.

He has called on rich countries to do more: on funding, on conflict prevention and in taking in refugees. At present, Turkey is the only OECD country to feature in the top 10 refugee-hosting states. The scaling back of efforts to handle asylum seekers in the Mediterranean has not reduced the numbers arriving – over 100,000 so far in 2015, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia – but has seen casualties soar.

Just like its predecessor in the aftermath of the Second World War, UNHCR needs to sell the idea that refugees will make good citizens. There are plenty of stories to choose from: Tahir, who fled Afghanistan aged 13 and who is now an architect in Greece;

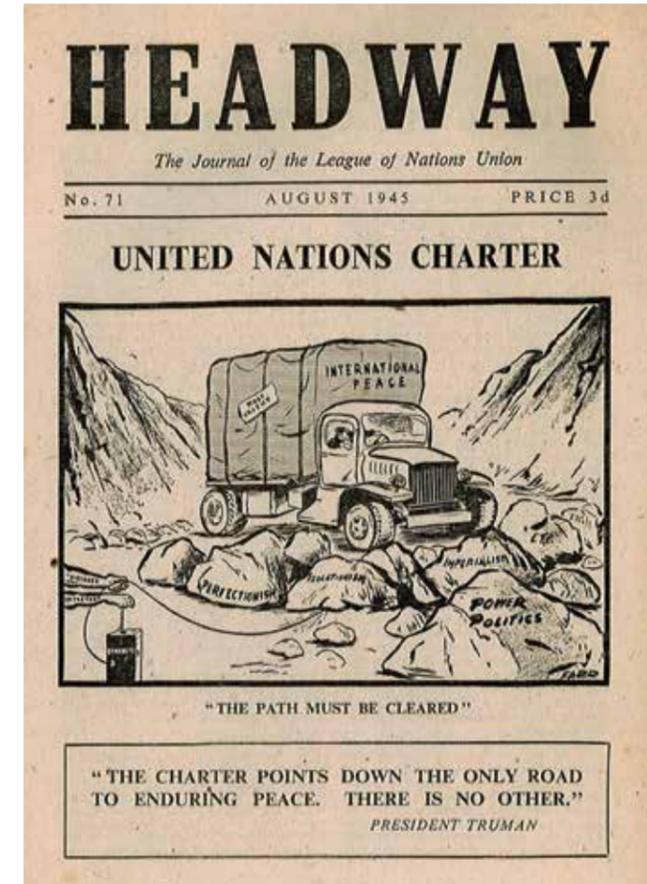


Syrians wait by the border to cross into Turkey
© Gokhan Sahin/Getty Images

Subba, a Bhutanese refugee in Nepal, who is helping Nepalese families to rebuild their lives following this year's earthquake; Nabi, a former refugee from Pakistan who helped Afghanistan qualify for the 2015 cricket world cup; Mohammed, an Eritrean refugee in Sudan, who has just won a scholarship in the Netherlands; and Saido from Burundi, a Premier League footballer who has played for his host country England's national team.

*António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, September 2014

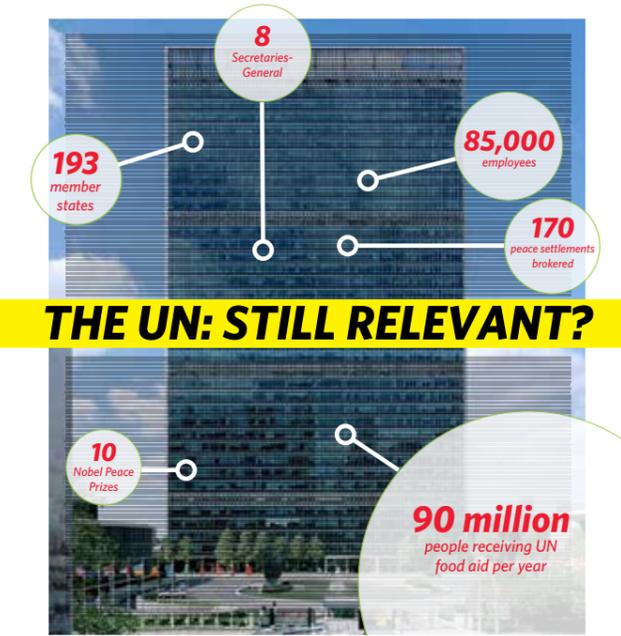
Feature



Headway cover (August 1945) and New World cover (Winter 2011). UNA-UK's magazine has provided news and comment on the UN and UK's relationship with it since the Organization's inception

New World

News and comment on the UN & UNA-UK Winter 2011 // £3.00



MILESTONES



The UNA-UK story

In 2015 the Association, like the UN, turns 70. This article traces UNA-UK's story, from the League of Nations Union to its current campaigns on UK and UN policy

UNA-UK shares its birth year with the United Nations, and like the UN, it is a second take. The Association's roots lie in the League of Nations Union (LNU), formed in 1918 to promote international justice and collective security through the establishment of the League of Nations. It became the largest and most influential peace organisation in the UK, with nearly half a million members.

The LNU played an important role in British inter-war politics, and prominent Liberal and Conservative politicians – including foreign secretary Edward Grey and Lord Cecil, one of the League's architects – were heavily involved. In 1935, it conducted the 'Peace Ballot', which surveyed 11 million people – 38 per cent of the adult population – on their attitudes to the League's aims and objectives. The LNU felt that Britain's growing

isolationism had to be countered by a massive demonstration of support for a UK foreign policy in which the League played a central role.

The results of the ballot, which showed overwhelming approval for collective peace and security, were widely publicised. Some commentators have suggested it led to the Axis powers believing Britain to be unwilling to go to war, even though those voting in favour of military action to counter aggression outnumbered those against by three to one. Winston Churchill said it showed that Britons were resolved to go to war for a righteous cause.

The failure of the League to respond to conflicts such as the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, and the absence of key states – the US refused to join; Germany, Japan and Italy left; and the USSR was expelled – made clear the

limits of international organisation without full participation. LNU membership plummeted.

Planning for a successor – to the League and the LNU – began while the Second World War was still raging. On 7 June 1945, three weeks before the United Nations Charter was opened for signature, UNA-UK held its first meeting. On 10 October, a fortnight before the Charter entered into force, the Association was inaugurated in a packed Royal Albert Hall. Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Anthony Eden MP and Megan Lloyd-George MP addressed the crowds. Lord Cecil remarked: “the first great experiment is over – we must work for the second.”

The Association absorbed much of the LNU’s work, resources and staff. In the late 1940s, it focused on enshrining the values of the UN Charter in the hearts and minds of Britons and on calling for strong UK support for its work. This included a generous approach to resettling refugees.

In the 1950s, it started collections to support the UN’s work, effectively doubling the UK’s contribution to UNICEF in 1953. It also sent volunteers to rebuild houses in Austria and Germany. UNA-UK’s support for decisive UN action in Korea led to an exodus of pacifist members, some of whom returned in later years.

By the 1960s, the volunteer programme had grown, with 30 overseas camps and an official placement scheme (see box). Disarmament and human rights became major concerns for the Association, which also began to discuss environmental matters.

In the 1970s, UNA-UK campaigned tirelessly for overseas development aid – our call for the UK to meet the 0.7 per cent target was only met in 2013. It also organised a series of events ahead of the first UN World Conference on Women.

The 1980s saw UNA-UK lead the “Let’s Freeze this Winter” campaign, which lobbied hard against the deployment of missiles by NATO and the USSR. After the UK withdrew from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Association set up an informal all-party group of MPs to work for

its re-entry, eventually achieved in 1997. The national commission for UNESCO was also housed within UNA-UK.

In the 1990s, UNA-UK was heavily involved in education work, with model UN events and teaching resources linked to the UN’s 50th anniversary. It also celebrated the end of apartheid – a longstanding priority for the Association. The first half of the next decade was devoted to campaigning against the Iraq war, and the second to arms control, with UNA-UK playing a key role in reversing the UK’s position on cluster munitions, paving the way for a global treaty.

UNA-UK’s mission in 2015 remains the same as it was in 1945: enshrining the values of the UN in the hearts and minds of the public, ensuring strong UK support for the Organization, and advocating ways to make the UN more effective.

Three recent campaigns exemplify this approach: first, our successful push to keep teaching about the United Nations and global citizenship in the national curriculum for England. Second, our UK general election campaign, which called for serious discussion of Britain’s role and set out a foreign policy manifesto, outlining 10 ways in which the UK could act as a force for good, such as greater engagement with UN peacekeeping and a strong commitment to human rights. And third, the 1 for 7 Billion Campaign, a global initiative spearheaded by UNA-UK, calling for a fair, open and inclusive process to select the UN Secretary-General.

70 years ago, UNA-UK was founded to serve as a bridge between the UN and people in this country. Today, this mission is more important than ever. From climate change to pandemics, terrorism to displacement, the challenges facing the world require an effective UN, supported by an engaged UK Government and public that understands how much global solutions will deliver for them. ●

Help us make the case for the UN: visit www.una.org.uk to find out more, get involved and donate.

UNA-UK: a breeding ground for UN careers

Michael Askwith, British Association of Former UN Civil Servants (BAFUNCS)

During the 1960s and ’70s, UNA-UK was a key member of the British Volunteer Programme, sending volunteers to UN funds, programmes and agencies. About 60 volunteers were posted between 1965 and 1975, all funded by the UK Overseas Development Administration, the forerunner of the Department for International Development (DFID).

Volunteers fell into two categories. Some served in a technical capacity, as educators or agriculturalists. Others, about six per year, became Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) in UN Development Programme and UNICEF country offices – invaluable work experience in development and humanitarian aid.

Paid work was by no means guaranteed on completion of the two-

year assignments. But nearly half of UNA-UK’s volunteers succeeded in becoming UN staffers. Thereafter, each pursued his or her career, often moving from field to head office positions and back into the field at a senior level. They include: two Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General, one Assistant Secretary-General and 19 heads of mission (country/regional director, representative or coordinator).

Together, they have served over 1,000 years and completed 166 assignments in 78 countries for 16 UN bodies. In the course of their careers, they were involved in a large number of significant events and operations. A few examples: Alan Doss headed missions in Liberia

and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Michael Askwith supported the referendum in Eritrea. Robert England worked with displaced persons in Sri Lanka, and Matthew Kahane opened up the UNDP country office in post-communist Belarus.

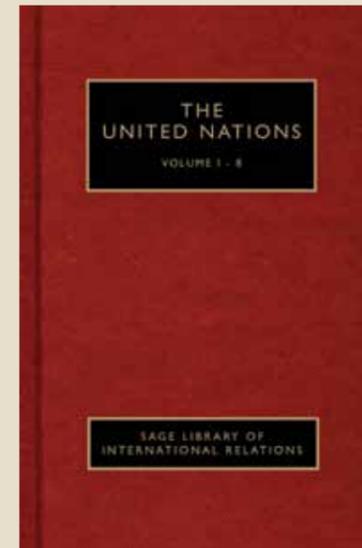
Through these former volunteers, UNA-UK has had considerable impact on the work of the UN and the countries in which they served, often in challenging circumstances. Both BAFUNCS and UNA-UK are delighted that DFID has re-started its support for JPOs – we are certain the next batch of recruits will have just as much to offer.

A longer version of this article is available at www.una.org.uk/UN70

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