

New World



News and comment on the UN & UNA-UK

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WITH *Christina Ashford, Stamp Out Poverty / Sharan Burrow, International Trade Union Confederation / Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN High Representative for LDCs / Mark Lyall Grant, UK Ambassador to the UN / Ed Mayo, Cooperatives UK*

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- **Influence decision-makers and opinion-shapers to promote UN goals**
- **Stimulate debate and action on ways to make the UN more effective**



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Trader in front of a display turning red as stocks tumble in 2008 © Simon Belcher / Alamy

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Natalie Samarasinghe on a fresh approach to global economic governance

As *New World* goes to press, speculation about Greece's future as a member of the eurozone has reached fever pitch. The doomsday headlines are a far cry from the celebrations to mark the euro's arrival in 2002. Then, the introduction of a common currency seemed an unbelievable feat of integration for a continent that had spent much of the previous century divided, and a fitting legacy for those who had worked to create a more stable Europe – and world – through institutions such as the UN, World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

This issue of *New World* looks at the role of these institutions in addressing the current financial crisis, which is global both in its causes and impacts. The world's poorest states are suffering as tourism, investment and remittances have slowed. So too has aid. Official development assistance fell last year for the first time since 1997. We need an estimated 600m new jobs over the next decade to return to pre-2008 employment levels. And many countries continue to be shackled by debt.

The good news is that there are solutions. On page 12, Cheick Sidi Diarra describes the potential of the least developed countries to contribute to global growth. Our opinion pieces make the case for green jobs (page 8); the cooperative business model (page 10); and revenue-raising financial transactions taxes (page 9). Our feature story on page 16 looks at how to strengthen global economic governance.

At their core, these ideas call for a change in our approach to growth. While some of us, particularly in Europe and the US, might have felt well-served by existing systems until recently, these structures have never worked for a large proportion of the world's people.

Our cover image pays homage to the groundbreaking chart produced by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in 1992, which depicted global income distribution across population quintiles. The resulting 'champagne glass' image

Global wealth distribution by population quintiles

The top 1%

61 million individuals – less than 1% of the world's population, have the same amount of income as the poorest 56% – 3.5 billion people.

Each horizontal band represents an equal fifth of the world's people

Source: UNICEF report 'Global Inequality: beyond the bottom billion' (July 2011), using data from the World Bank, UNU-WIDER, UNDP and Eurostat

became a symbol of the vast gap between rich and poor. Twenty years later, the percentages have barely shifted, despite a doubling of global economic output. The top 1% owns 43% of the world's wealth. This elite club may well include you – you need an annual income of \$34,000 (£21,000) to qualify.

It is clear that a fresh approach is needed to ensure that our efforts to reignite the economy do not leave the majority behind again. While markets can deliver prosperity, there is no 'trickle down' when it comes to equality or social protection. Nor can they tackle challenges such as climate change. What we need is concerted national and international action.

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (the Rio+20 summit) in June is an important opportunity to demonstrate that such action is possible. Leaders should eschew quick, attention-

grabbing wins and focus on the long game – creating a framework for development that is both sustainable and equitable. The UK will play a key role in this process through David Cameron's appointment as co-chair of a UN panel to explore what should follow the Millennium Development Goals (page 23). It is vital that those of us in the UK let the government know that the British public cares about these issues.

One way to do this is to take part in our UN Forum event in London on 14 July. We are delighted to announce that Mark Malloch-Brown will deliver the keynote speech. A former UN Deputy Secretary-General, World Bank Vice-President, UNDP head and UK government minister, he is uniquely placed to discuss these challenges. Book your ticket today: www.una.org.uk/forum (full details on page 14). ●

The richest 20% of the population earn 81.2% of world income

RICHEST

The second richest 20% of the population earn 9.4% of world income

The third richest 20% of the population earn 5.6% of world income

The second poorest 20% of the population earn 2.4% of world income

PERSONS EARNING UNDER \$2/DAY

The poorest 20% of the population earn 1.4% of world income

POOREST

New World online

UNA-UK's flagship magazine is now online, with a dedicated mini-site featuring all the content from the print issue as well as host of web-exclusive articles and opportunities for readers to engage with us.

W Web content is flagged up throughout the magazine with this symbol.

As always, we welcome your thoughts, comments and suggestions. Email the editor on samarsinghe@una.org.uk

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

www.una.org.uk/new_world



Remembering the collective in a world of competing interests:

UNA-UK Chair Sir Jeremy Greenstock sets the scene for this issue of *New World*

This edition of *New World* coincides with the run-up to the London Olympics and, on a less grand scale, with the intensifying preparations for UNA-UK's UN Forum on 14 July. Both are concerned, at their different levels, with promoting and celebrating the collective spirit, without which it will be impossible to make a free world run in an ordered way.

This issue's articles – on global unemployment, economic governance, finance for development and sustainable growth – are concerned with the problem of effective cooperation across borders when there are so many things – not least the economic downturn – driving in the other direction.

The world is becoming more competitive and selfish, even as freedom of choice and opportunity expand. Eliminating poverty, prioritising human rights and preventing conflict would be so much easier if the institutions created to deliver order and structure at the macro level – nationally and internationally – were humming with efficiency. However, most of the familiar ones, including national governments, are struggling to meet these challenges. The time has come to realise that we need to invest in reinvigorating them.

The biggest conclusion to draw from the events of the past 18 months is that the popular voice has overtaken the authority of governments as the driver of trends and the creator of new facts. This is a tribute to the spread of freedom, but it brings with it a problem of organisation.

The Arab Spring – an early manifestation of what is surely a global phenomenon – is illustrating this quite clearly. Somewhere, there has to be a repository of common interest – and incentives to promote and defend it – or we are heading for a jungle.

The United Nations, in exercising its political and intergovernmental functions, is vulnerable to the same polarising pressures as other

institutions when responding to a more open world. The Security Council too often gets blocked on the sharper issues. However, the organisation is also able to stand above politics and connect with grassroots trends in one surprisingly powerful way: it ordains and expresses principles of justice and fairness that resonate more broadly than any other value system.

There has to be a repository of common interest - and incentives to promote and defend it - or we are heading for a jungle

Governments and individuals alike can be called to account in a very public and constraining manner if they transgress the bounds of legitimacy. Charles Taylor, Liberia's ruthless ex-president, is heading for prison sooner than Syria's Bashar al-Assad, but both have come up against the limits to which they can take injustice and the abuse of human rights.

Generally recognised and accepted as a source of legitimacy, the UN can play a significant role in this difficult new international environment. And that provides the context – or at least an important part of it – for the more detailed avenues of collective action that are described in these pages.

Keeping this trend going needs support from around the world, including from individuals, if the right balance between freedom and order is to be established. We all have to contribute to that – in our choices, in our compromises and in the respect and support we show for our indispensable institutions.

Come to the Forum to discuss these issues and enjoy the Games, but, most important, continue to play your part when both are over. ●

In brief

● Global poverty target met ...

Fresh World Bank figures indicate that developing countries as a group have reached the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target of cutting the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 50% from 1990 levels. Much of the progress is down to China's economic rise. If China is excluded from the figures, the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day was about 1.1 billion in 2008 – the same as in 1981. At the regional level, Africa and Latin America still lag behind.

The UN Development Programme estimates that

\$300bn

is needed to lift 1 billion people out of extreme poverty, which represents just 1.6% of the income of the world's richest 10%

● ... and drinking water goal ...

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has also hailed international efforts to halve the proportion of people without safe drinking water. Over the past 20 years, two billion people have gained access to improved water supplies, increasing the global percentage to 89% from 76% in 1990 – the baseline for all MDG targets.

● ... but little progress on equality

A new study by World Bank economist Branko Milanovic concludes that disparities have increased between the rich and poor within countries and, despite a brief slowing due to the financial crisis, between countries. During the past 20 years, global inequality has remained higher than for any individual country, despite the world's economic output more than doubling during this time period.

Pakistani children bathe after filling water bottles from a leaking pipe in a slum area of Islamabad. As the world celebrates the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals target on drinking water, it should not ignore the deep challenges still facing many countries and communities. In Pakistan, around 40% of the population lacks access to clean drinking water.

© Farooq Naeem/AFP/Getty Images



● MDGs 2.0

UK Prime Minister David Cameron, Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will co-chair a UN panel on what should replace the MDGs which are due to expire in 2015. The panel is tasked with creating a new international framework for development. Depending on the outcomes of the UN's Rio+20 sustainability summit this June, the panel could also be asked to flesh out proposals for a set of 'sustainable development goals'.

 Visit www.una.org.uk to read our initial recommendations for the panel

● FTT pressure grows stronger

Ahead of the European Union Leaders Summit on 23 May, a group of independent UN human rights experts called on the EU to take the lead in adopting a financial transactions tax (FTT) that would offset the costs of the current economic downturn and protect the rights of millions of people. Estimates suggest

that an FTT could raise billions towards tackling the impacts of the economic, climate and food crises on those who are least able to withstand them.

See Christina Ashford of Stamp Out Poverty on page 9

● Sahel crisis worsening

A major shortfall in funding is threatening to deepen the crisis in the Horn of Africa, where some 15 million people are suffering from food insecurity. Described by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as a "cascading crisis", the region has been in turmoil since a number of factors – drought, crop failures and soaring food and fuel prices – pushed millions of people into aid dependency. Conflict and instability have exacerbated the situation. Mali's military coup, for instance, forced 200,000 displaced persons to flee to neighbouring countries, while aid delivery in Nigeria is being hampered by terrorist group Boko Haram. The UN has raised less than half of the \$724m it needs to



mount an effective response to these spiralling problems.

● **UNA-UK push for WMD-free Middle East ...**

In a new UNA-UK publication *Towards a more secure and WMD-free Middle East*, Mark Fitzpatrick, a non-proliferation expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, lays out short- and medium-term recommendations on building support and confidence within the Middle East ahead of a UN conference on a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the region, scheduled for December 2012. The report comes at a pivotal moment for two of the key regional players.

 Visit www.una.org.uk to download a copy of the report

● **... and Iran and Israel start talking**

Iran has resumed talks on its nuclear programme with six world powers, and has

also been meeting the International Atomic Energy Agency. Meanwhile Finnish foreign minister Jaakko Laajava, the facilitator of the UN conference on a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, has held secret discussions with Israel. Although there was no official confirmation as to whether Israel would participate in the event – it has traditionally refused to take part in such events without its wider security concerns being addressed – the dialogue itself is positive. Commentators hope that the surprise coalition deal between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's Likud Party and the opposition Kadima Party might lead the country to take a more open stance on regional engagement and security issues.

● **First ICC conviction**

In its first ruling since it was founded 10 years ago, the International Criminal Court convicted former Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga of recruiting and enlisting child soldiers during hostilities between 2002 and 2003. This was followed

just a few weeks later by the conviction of former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Mr Taylor was found guilty on 11 counts of war crimes. The UN hailed the ruling as “a strong signal to all leaders that they are and will be held accountable for their actions”.

● **Sudan versus South Sudan**

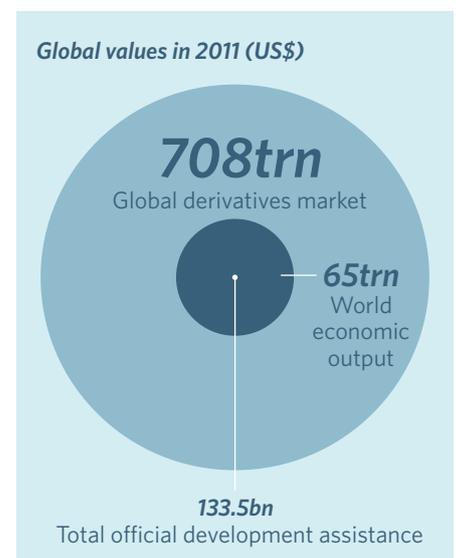
Hostilities between Sudan and South Sudan continue to escalate with military clashes, border disputes and heavy aerial bombardment of South Sudan. On 16 April Sudan declared the South an “enemy” state after the newly independent country captured the contested Heglig oil fields. It has since withdrawn. Oil remains a major point of contention as 75% of the reserves within the territory covered by the former, larger Sudanese state lie in South Sudan, while the pipeline and refineries are all in the north. On 2 May, the UN Security Council adopted a unanimous resolution threatening sanctions if talks are not resumed.

“There is no space in human rights for a trickle-down approach”

Magdalena Sepúlveda, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

● **Aid decline**

Figures published in April 2012 by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development show that official development assistance fell by nearly 3% to \$133.5bn in 2011 – the first drop in this figure since 1997.





Sharan Burrow argues that what the world needs now is decent work – and plenty of it, too

According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 2012 *Global Employment Trends* report, the world needs 600m new jobs over the next decade to reduce global unemployment to the level it was at before the 2008 financial crisis.

Merely recovering from the worldwide recession might seem a limited objective, but think about it – 600m jobs. Barack Obama has been lauded for presiding over the creation of some half a million new jobs in the US over the past months, but at this pace, even the world's biggest economy would take 300 years to create all the jobs that the world needs over the next 10.

Of course, we must not only look to the US, or even developed countries as a whole, to create all these jobs. Countries like Brazil, India, China and the Philippines will also need to play a major role. But those countries too face challenges when it comes to job creation. This is because the world does not need jobs – let alone growth – at any price.

What the world needs is decent work and sustainable growth. Two UN conferences taking place this summer will be crucial to this effort. The first is that of the ILO, from 30 May to 15 June.

Predating the UN, the ILO is the only inclusive global institution with a remit to address unemployment and conditions at work. Its tripartite structure enables

unions, employers and governments to come together to promote the decent work agenda, including more and better jobs, rights at work, social dialogue and social protection like pensions and family credits (of which Brazil's *Bolsa Familia*, a welfare programme that provides short- and long-term aid to families, is a good example).

Then, in late June, the UN will convene a major international conference in Brazil on sustainable development. 'Rio+20' will focus on green jobs as one of its two main themes. This approach is vital. If we are going to create more and better jobs, we cannot ignore the impact that they will have on the planet – nor indeed the impact of existing jobs.

Unions support the green jobs agenda – we recently published a report showing how it could create 48m jobs in just 12 countries – but we will only be able to make the transition to a low- or no-carbon economy if we ensure that the workers who will be affected – and their rights – are at the core of our efforts.

However, the meeting taking place this summer that could play the greatest role in tackling global unemployment will be held under the auspices of the G20. Employment ministers from the world's largest economies met in May in

Guadalajara, Mexico (which currently holds the chair of the G20).

Unions welcomed ministers' commitments to create green jobs and tackle youth unemployment – 20–50% of young people in G20 countries are out of work – but warned that leaders must take action at the June G20 summit in Los Cabos, Mexico, to realise these commitments. Trade unionists and employers will be there too, as the L20 (labour) and B20 (business) groups, to pursue what is often a common agenda for youth guarantees, apprenticeships and infrastructure investment.

The current global unemployment rate – some 200m – and the extra jobs we need to provide for growing populations and increased urbanisation, will pose a huge challenge to the world economy. We will not get where we need to be without a renewed emphasis on equality.

Women, in particular, need equal pay and child and elder care, as well as an end to violence and harassment, to allow them to access the workplace. But we also need better pay across the board, and to take steps that constrain the widening gap between pay at the top and in the middle.

Addressing both these aspects of equality (and there are many more) will require a return to the collective bargaining between unions and management that was a feature of the rise of the middle class in the US and the creation of the European social model after the Second World War, as well as more recent moves towards conquering inequality in Latin America.

This is the trade union agenda for how to tackle poverty and climate change and build a new, better, world economy based on justice, fairness and rights for all. ●

Sharan Burrow is General Secretary of the Brussels-based International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which has 175 million members in 150 countries. A former teacher in New South Wales, Australia, Ms Burrow was elected to lead the ITUC in 2010 after standing down as President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions

Union members and their supporters protest in the US city of Detroit, Michigan © Jim West/Alamy





Christina Ashford on making the Robin Hood Tax work for rich and poor countries alike

It would seem self-evident that the poorest people on the planet should not pay for the mistakes of the richest; nor should the sick. But as austerity eats into aid budgets that is exactly what is happening.

The Global Fund, the world's largest financial backer of the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria, saves an estimated 150 lives every hour – that is over 100,000 lives a month. Yet, declining donor contributions have forced it to cancel its next funding round, leaving millions of people at risk of losing access to lifesaving treatment. In Tanzania alone, where the Fund provides two out of every five dollars used to fight TB, more than 45,000 patients will be affected. A further 3 million people may lose HIV counselling and testing services, as the country expects to lose some \$50m in aid due to the cancellation. One health worker explained that, without the Fund's help, her patients would be forced to choose between taking medicine and buying food.

This is just one example of the world's poorest people losing out as a result of a financial crisis for which they bear no responsibility. There are plenty of others. Earlier this year, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), found that official development assistance fell by nearly 3% in 2011 – the first drop in 14 years. There is now little immediate prospect of finding the \$168–180bn a year needed to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or the sums pledged by developed countries (rising to \$100bn a year by 2020) to fund climate mitigation and adaptation activities in developing countries. The Green Climate Fund, intended to manage and disburse these monies, is yet to be designed, and with no agreement reached on how it will be financed, there are concerns that this is a pot that may never be filled.

With donor countries struggling with the impact of the financial crisis and determinedly pursuing domestic austerity programmes, there is a pressing need for new sources of finance.

Perhaps the most talked about is the Robin Hood Tax, properly called financial transaction taxes (FTTs). These would involve a small levy on transactions involving the four main classes of financial asset: equities, bonds, foreign exchange and their derivatives. The proposed FTTs are minuscule – the European Commission (EC) has suggested a tax rate of 0.1% on equities and bonds and 0.01% on derivatives, and the Leading Group (a coalition of international organisations, NGOs and 63 countries) a 0.005% tax on foreign exchange – but their impact would be enormous.

Polls across Europe show widespread public support for a measure that would make the undertaxed financial sector pay its fair share

An FTT on all asset classes rolled out across all developed countries would generate almost \$300bn annually from the currently undertaxed financial sector, helping to redistribute a small proportion of money from those who caused the financial crisis to those who had the least to do with it but are suffering its effects the most. Moreover, by increasing the costs of financial transactions, the tax would discourage short-termism and speculative behaviour in the sector, curbing the casino banking that contributed to the crisis.

The tax has attracted a host of prominent advocates, from Bill Gates to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It has been endorsed by 1,000 leading economists (including winners of the Nobel Prize) and gained widespread political backing.

Last year, Brazil, France, Germany and South Africa declared their support, and FTT legislation has been tabled by the EC. Nine EU member states (France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Belgium and Finland) are pushing for this to be fast-tracked, meaning it could be implemented as early as next

year. Polls across Europe show widespread public support for a measure that would make the financial sector pay its fair share.

Do not believe those – usually from the financial services – who claim that it cannot be done. In recent decades, FTTs have been introduced in some 40 countries either on a temporary or permanent basis where they raise significant revenue. In the UK, for example, an FTT on share transactions raises in the region of \$5bn each year. Brazil, meanwhile, raised some \$15bn in 2010 through various transactions taxes.

The Robin Hood Tax Campaign wants revenues from FTTs to be used to combat climate change, tackle poverty and protect public services. Since we are calling for the money to be split between the country where it is raised and poor countries, it would be a win-win policy for donors and aid recipients alike.

Whilst the revenue raised would be collected nationally, there is precedent for the income to be spent cooperatively by participating countries on commonly-agreed outcomes. UNITAID – an initiative that uses revenues from air passenger duties to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria – is a good model. The taxes are collected nationally, pooled by the World Health Organisation, and disbursed to great effect internationally, mostly in developing countries. By using a proportion of the new money raised, FTTs could help to finance the Green Climate Fund, the Global Fund and the MDGs – ensuring that the world's poorest will never have to choose between buying life-saving medical treatment or food for their families. ●

Christina Ashford is Policy and Communications Officer at Stamp Out Poverty, which campaigns for a financial transaction tax that would raise new sources of finance to protect jobs and public services at home and tackle poverty and climate change abroad. Stamp Out Poverty is a member of the Robin Hood Tax Campaign, a coalition of 114 organisations, including Oxfam, Save the Children and UNA-UK



Ed Mayo makes the case for cooperative businesses as a model for sustainable growth

The UN General Assembly has declared 2012 to be the International Year of Cooperatives. From Argentina to Zambia, over 1m cooperatives across the globe will be demonstrating how they are helping to build a better world.

International years serve to draw attention to and encourage action on major issues. The International Year of Cooperatives is intended to raise public awareness of the invaluable contribution that cooperative enterprises make to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

The International Cooperative Alliance, the voice of the global cooperative movement, is coordinating activities worldwide, with Cooperatives UK, the trade association in this country that campaigns for cooperation, leading British celebrations.

This is a truly unique year for the cooperative movement. It is an opportunity for every cooperative business in the world – from locally owned community shops to national brands – to show how they make a difference by pursuing economic viability and social responsibility. These businesses have proven that they can thrive and be sustainable, and the International Year pays tribute to their resilience.

Cooperatives are one of the world's best-kept secrets. The number of cooperative businesses across the world is increasing steadily, with over 5,000 of them successfully trading in the UK and a staggering 1.4m worldwide.

In the UK, cooperative businesses contribute £33.2bn to the country's economy. They have grown by 21% since the start of the financial crisis in 2008, outperforming the UK economy as a whole. So do cooperatives provide a model for sustainable growth in the future? There is certainly a strong case to be made.

Around 236,000 people are now employed by cooperative businesses, and 12.8 million own stakes in them – that is more than a fifth of the people living in the UK. Cooperatives UK's annual state

of the sector report, *The UK Cooperative Economy 2011*, documents the vital contribution that these businesses make. Results show that The Cooperative Group alone, ranked first on The Cooperative 100 list, has a turnover of over £12bn. Cooperatives are enjoying a renaissance – and not just in the UK.

Do cooperatives provide a model for sustainable growth in the future? There is certainly a strong case to be made

Some people think of cooperatives as small, local enterprises and there are indeed thousands of organisations that fit that description. But many cooperatives are large and work at the national or regional level, while others are giants running global operations valued at billions of pounds.

Together, they have helped the cooperative movement to grow into an international economy, equivalent in value to the ninth largest in the world. 80% of Spanish olive oil is produced by cooperatives. So too is most of France's Champagne and Italy's Parmesan cheese. Cooperatives also account for all Fairtrade goods produced, enabling 887,000 smallholders in developing countries to earn a decent income.

A recent report by Cooperatives UK shows that globally, cooperative members outnumber individual shareholders three to one. Across the world, cooperative businesses have nearly 1 billion members and a turnover of \$1.6trn, securing the livelihood of 3 billion people – nearly half the world's population.

So, why are cooperative businesses so powerful and successful? Cooperatives are unique because they are owned and run by their members. They are democratic, allowing members to have an equal say in how the business is run. Rather than rewarding outside investors, profits are shared among the members.



Nicaraguan pottery cooperative © Philip Scalia/Alamy

Unicorn Grocery, a worker-owned cooperative in Manchester, is a perfect example of the resilient, cooperative business model in the UK. The business is non-hierarchical, offering a flat rate of pay, equal ownership and shared responsibility for the decisions that govern it. Members not only donate 5% of their wages to charity, but also offer advice to those wishing to learn about the way they work.

In the US, the well-established Ocean Spray cooperative has earned global recognition. The cranberry- and grapefruit-growing business was founded in 1930 by three farmers who were keen to expand the market for their crops through innovation. Today, Ocean Spray is owned by more than 600 farming families across North America.

Cooperatives thrive because they invest in people. Help us to raise awareness of this fantastic business model by supporting the 2012 UN International Year of Cooperatives. ●

Ed Mayo is Secretary General of Cooperatives UK, the trade association for cooperative businesses in the UK

Take action to celebrate the UN International Year of Cooperatives

The UN has designated 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives. It offers a unique opportunity to join with 1.4m cooperatives across the world to promote a better way of doing business.

The International Year of Cooperatives offers cooperatives and their supporters a once in a lifetime opportunity to ride the wave of interest in cooperatives and promote what makes them different to your colleagues, members and customers.

Cooperatives UK has created a wide range of tools and materials to help you make the most of the International Year, all available from www.uk.coop/2012

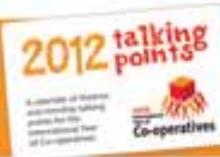
Here are 12 easy ways to take part in 2012, using the materials available.

1 Logo

Use the International Year of Co-operatives logo!
All logos available at www.uk.coop/2012



2



Communications

Use the calendar of quarterly themes and monthly talking points to organise your communications

3

Newsletter

Cut and paste our standard text on the International Year for your newsletters and news pages

4

Email

Place this footer at the bottom of your emails: 2012 is the International Year of Co-operatives. Make it co-operative at www.uk.coop/2012

5



Website

Add a 'did you know' box on your website, using the monthly talking points

6

Blogs

Copy and paste the content of our monthly expert blogs into yours. Find the blogs to download at www.uk.coop/2012/blogs

7

Twitter

Use the international hashtag for the Year, **#coops2012**, to get involved in conversations, follow @CooperativesUK and tweet with your news



8

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Least developed countries hold the key to global recovery

Cheick Sidi Diarra argues that greater support for the 48 UN member states with the lowest levels of socioeconomic development will bring about a more secure and prosperous world



AS the global financial crisis of 2008–09 unfolded, it caused a ripple effect across the financial capitals of the world's most advanced economies. This saw the collapse of large financial institutions, the bailout of banks by national governments and the plummeting of stocks around the world. In the immediate aftermath of the crisis, economists were quick to point out that, due to their isolation and lack of integration in global markets, as well as improved macroeconomic policies, the 48 least developed countries (LDCs) would emerge relatively unscathed in the initial phases of the ensuing global slowdown.

But with the deepening of the financial crisis and the subsequent austerity measures imposed by governments worldwide, LDCs find themselves increasingly confronted with the very real effects of the financial crisis. The delayed negative impact has proven especially harsh on these economies, given the uptick in growth that several of them had experienced over the last decade.

Prior to the financial fallout, LDCs showed improved economic performance. Real GDP growth had surpassed the 7% target set by the Brussels Programme of Action – a partnership framework established in 2001 with the aim of accelerating development in LDCs – up from less than 4% during the 1990s. Then, in 2009, GDP growth dropped to 4.5%.

The reduction in growth was particularly sharp for small-island LDCs, which rely heavily on tourism – one of the sectors most affected by the crisis. The downturn in international trade, meanwhile, has hit hard across the board. Asian manufacturing exporters, for instance, have experienced decline as a result of reduced demand

in their main export markets. Foreign direct-investment flows, which reached their highest level in 2007, have also been declining rapidly since the onset of the financial crisis, affecting oil- and mineral-exporting LDCs in particular. The drop-off in migrant workers' remittances is of equal concern.

The impact of the global economic crisis on LDCs is not only multi-faceted; it will also affect different countries in different ways, depending on the mode of integration of a particular LDC into the global economy and the structure of its domestic economy.

Despite measures agreed by these countries and their development partners to tackle these challenges, LDCs still suffer from a number of structural constraints that militate against their sustained growth, development and structural transformation, all of which are critical to poverty reduction. Weak productive capacities and limited diversification, as well as underdeveloped agricultural sectors, are some of the impediments to LDCs' long-term development, rendering them vulnerable to external shocks.

Similarly, LDCs continue to struggle with improving human and social development. Some, including those emerging from conflict, lack adequate governance capacities and institutions.

In addition, new challenges have emerged, including volatile energy and food prices, and ongoing concerns over food security, as well as the growing impacts of climate change and the loss of biodiversity. All of these have increased vulnerabilities and inequalities within LDCs, and have adversely affected development gains in these countries.

The way forward

Yet, despite what may appear as a hopeless situation for these nations, we at the UN Office for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), and our partners, remain ever positive that, with continued support and commitment, the situation in LDCs can be remedied.

The Fourth UN Conference on LDCs, which took place in 2011 in Istanbul, resulted in the adoption of a bold political declaration and a comprehensive and ambitious programme of action. Its overarching goal is to address the structural handicaps of LDCs in order to secure poverty eradication and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals across all LDCs.

The declaration calls for a shift in the development paradigm, with a rebalancing of priorities between the productive sectors and social sectors, as well as balanced roles for the state and the market. Thus, the first priority area of the programme of action is bolstering productive capacity, including basic infrastructure, energy and transfer of technology and know-how, in order to bring about much-needed structural transformation. It has in its sights the ultimate goal of increasing decent employment,



Jean-Nepo Bazambanza demonstrates Rwandan firm Nuru Energy's innovative pedal-powered portable generator, which won the \$200,000 World Bank Lighting Africa Prize in 2008 © Steve Terrill/ AFP/Getty Images

We should never lose sight of the fact that LDCs represent an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare and food and energy security

which is essential to ensuring that a reduction in poverty is sustainable. The implementation of agreed measures in this area is crucial for LDCs to benefit from higher commodity prices in the medium term, especially in the agricultural sector, which dominates most LDC economies.

In Istanbul, UN member states also called for an expansion in, and the broadening of, partnerships for LDCs, not only with development partners and countries in the South but also with non-traditional players, specifically parliaments, civil society organisations and the private sector.

There is no room for complacency. More than 75% of people in LDCs live in poverty and it is a matter of deep concern to the international community that only three countries (Botswana, Cape Verde and the Maldives) have graduated out of this category in the past three decades.

Solidarity, cooperation and partnerships with LDCs – the poorest and most vulnerable countries – and their people are not only moral imperatives; they are also economic, security and political ones.

We should never lose sight of the fact that LDCs represent an enormous human and natural resource potential for world economic growth, welfare and food and energy security.

A successful, renewed and strengthened global partnership that effectively addresses the special needs of LDCs will ultimately contribute to the cause of peace, prosperity and sustainable development for all. ●

Cheick Sidi Diarra is UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. In 2011 he served as the Secretary-General of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which took place in Istanbul, Turkey

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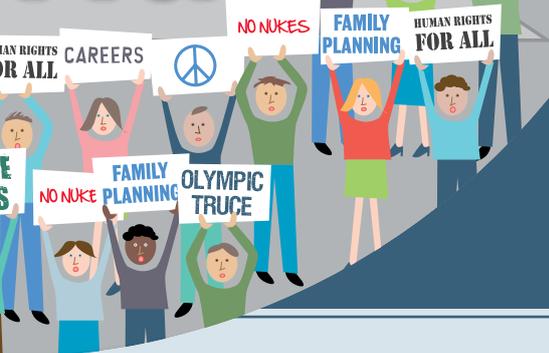
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Lord Malloch-Brown

Former UN Deputy Secretary-General

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- **Lord Bates**, Founder of Walk for Truce
- **Margaret Beckett MP**, former UK Foreign Secretary
- **Dr Chaloka Beyani**, UN Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons
- **Lord Browne**, former UK Defence Secretary
- **Steve Crawshaw**, Director of Office of Secretary General, Amnesty International
- **John Ericson**, Chief, Outreach Unit, UN Office of Human Resources Management
- **Andrew Felton**, Senior External Affairs Counsellor, World Bank
- **Jeremy Gilley**, Founder of Peace One Day
- **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**, Chairman of UNA-UK
- **Maureen Greenwood-Basken**, Director of Policy Initiatives, Women and Population, UN Foundation
- **Lord Hannay of Chiswick**, Chair of UN All-Party Parliamentary Group
- **Wilfried Lemke**, UN Special Adviser on Sport for Peace and Development
- **Alison Marshall**, Public Affairs Director, UNICEF UK
- **Dr Babatunde Osotimehin**, Executive Director, UN Population Fund
- **David Nussbaum**, CEO of WWF UK
- **Sara Parkin OBE**, Founder, Forum for the Future
- **Sir Malcolm Rifkind**, former UK Foreign Secretary
- **Sir Patrick Stewart**, actor and UNA-UK patron
- **Honey Thaljieh**, founder of the first Palestinian women's football team
- **Baroness Williams**, former minister and nuclear non-proliferation expert
- **Sir Nicholas Young**, Chief Executive, British Red Cross

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Make sense to
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How to work towards a world
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UNA-UK

The UN and the financial crisis: breathing life into Bretton Woods

“It is extraordinarily difficult, if not outright impossible, for any country to cope alone with the problems of cyclical booms and depressions ... while there is good prospect that with international cooperation the problem of the business cycle and of mass unemployment can be largely solved”

Jacob Viner, American economist

WRITTEN in 1942, Jacob Viner’s words still resonate – although many would question his faith in international cooperation. His views reflect wartime hopes for global governance as the 26 countries allied against Nazi Germany embraced the idea that economic stability and peace were inextricably linked. These countries therefore sought to develop a framework for broader, permanent cooperation on these issues. The creation of the United Nations system represents the culmination of their efforts.

Early proposals on international financial institutions were ambitious. British economist John Maynard Keynes, one of the architects of the system that ultimately emerged, first suggested an “international clearing union” – a global bank that would issue its own currency, exchangeable with national currencies at fixed rates, and use this to measure trade deficits or surpluses. Each country would have an account and overdraft facility at the bank and, crucially, interest would not just be levied on deficits. Instead, countries with a credit of over half their overdraft would also be charged, encouraging them to export capital or increase imports. After a year, their surplus would be confiscated, helping to clear the deficit of others.

The system eventually created at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944 and in San Francisco a year later, when the UN Charter was signed, was certainly not as wide-reaching but it was comprehensive nonetheless. Under this system, the UN would be responsible for macroeconomic policy coordination, development planning and aid. Its Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) would oversee these functions and coordinate the work of the UN’s specialised agencies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was set up to manage fixed but adjustable exchange rates and to provide funds to countries facing a short-term balance of payments crisis. The International Bank for

Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) was to lend money to war-torn and developing countries at favourable rates. Proposals for an International Trade Organisation were never approved but the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade became the basis for the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which is not part of the UN system, over three decades later.

How effective have they been?

ECOSOC was never allowed to fulfil the major economic functions assigned to it by the UN Charter. The major economic powers, who are not accorded special status or powers in the Council, have tended to turn instead to the weighted structures of the IMF and World Bank. It has therefore not played a major role in macroeconomic, development or aid policy. Nor has it been able to coordinate effectively the activities of the growing number of specialised UN agencies. In part, this is due to its sweeping agenda, its membership (which, having been increased to 54 states, is unwieldy) and the overlap between its work and that of the General Assembly.

The Bretton Woods institutions, meanwhile, were fully functional by the 1950s. Over the next two decades, the World Bank acquired new arms – to mobilise private investment, provide long-term development finance and stimulate foreign direct investment. At the same time, the IMF created a virtual reserve asset called “special drawing rights”. With unprecedented global growth, this period has been called the golden age of capitalism.

Then, in 1971, the US was unable to back its excess currency with gold reserves and suspended the gold convertibility of the dollar, leading to widespread currency flotation. In one fell swoop, the IMF’s role as a manager of fixed exchange rates disappeared. Later, the mass expansion of private capital left the Fund and the World Bank with limited capacity to influence global markets. It also struck at the core of their functions:

Global Economic Governance

INSIDE THE UN SYSTEM

General Assembly (GA)

Comprised of all 193 UN member states, the GA has a mandate to consider economic issues, including international trade and financial institutions. Its decisions are not binding but reflect the weight of world opinion.

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

ECOSOC has 54 members (elected by the GA) and is charged with overseeing economic affairs and the work of the UN specialised agencies. Its decisions are not binding and it has little practical oversight of the agencies. It mostly undertakes studies and makes recommendations to the GA.

Specialised agencies

The agencies deal with specific development issues (e.g. the Food & Agriculture Organisation and Industrial Development Organisation). The IMF and World Bank are technically UN agencies but differ in structure. There is no formal oversight by ECOSOC, although they meet the Council annually to discuss finance for development.

Bretton Woods institutions

Both have 188 members. Membership is conditional and voting weighted towards the largest shareholders (based on factors such as GDP and international reserves).

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Set up to preserve economic stability, with functions including the provision of loans. To join, countries must provide economic data, which the IMF uses to calculate their quota of "special drawing rights" and voting shares. Restrictions can be placed on those who don't comply with their obligations (e.g. denial of funds).

World Bank Group

Set up to provide loans, grants and development advice. Members (who must belong to the IMF) are allotted 250 votes each, plus one for every share held in the Bank's capital stock (based on IMF quotas). The Bank's presidency is traditionally held by an American, while the IMF top job goes to a European.

OUTSIDE THE UN SYSTEM

G20

A grouping of the world's largest economies, the G20 meets to discuss global economic and financial matters.

Traditionally limited to finance ministers, it has become a forum for leaders since the 2008 financial crisis, replacing, to some extent, the G8. Its current membership comprises: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the EU (represented by the President of the European Council and of the European Central Bank), France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and the US. The IMF and World Bank regularly participate in G20 meetings and there is informal contact with other parts of the UN.

World Trade Organisation (WTO)

The WTO is mandated to oversee trade rules, settle disputes and promote free trade by persuading countries to abolish tariffs and other barriers. Open to any state with full autonomy over its own trade policies, membership needs the approval of all WTO members (currently numbering 155). Its decisions are binding on members and sanctions can be implemented for non-compliance. The WTO is led by a General Council of all countries, who normally approve the Director-General by consensus. The WTO regularly meets with the IMF and World Bank and it is required to consult with the IMF on financial issues.



poorer countries now had a growing pool of potential lenders – the private sector and emerging economies – whose loans had fewer strings attached.

At the same time the effects of these ‘strings’ were also causing alarm. Both the IMF and World Bank focused on the ‘adjustment’ of poor-country economies. Their loans and programmes were often conditional on measures such as inflation and public expenditure reductions, trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation. Time and again, these measures proved toxic. In the 1980s, several Latin American, Asian and African governments that had agreed to these conditions were subsequently removed from office due to domestic pressures and hardship – a pattern replicated during the following decade in the ex-Soviet states. Those leaders best able to force this harsh medicine on their countries were generally the most despotic.

Many developing-country leaders argued that the policies pursued by the IMF and World Bank were a

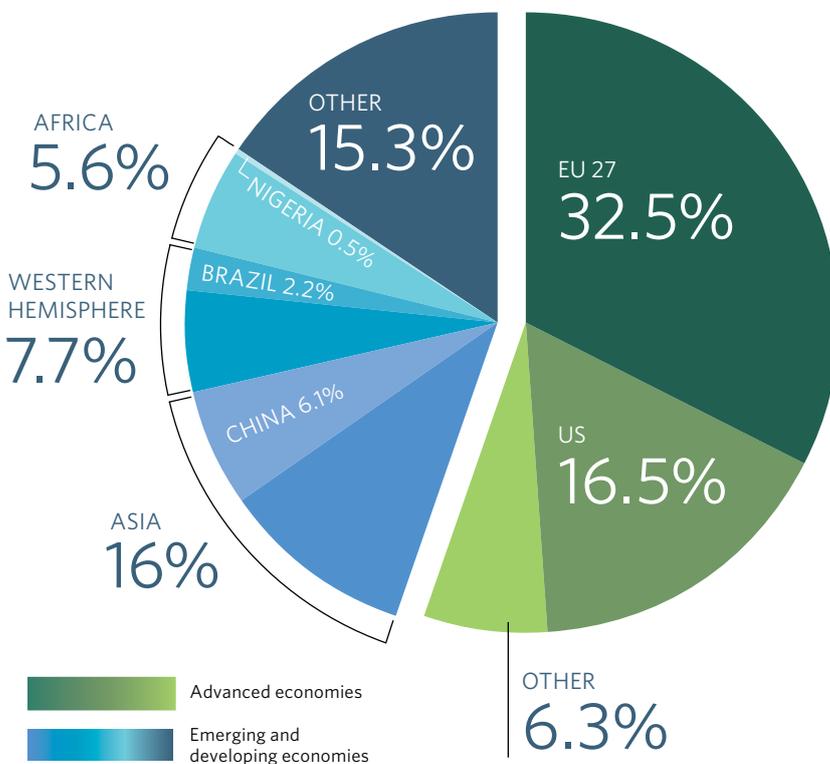
reflection of Anglo-American market fundamentalism. They objected to the practice of making loans conditional on the adoption of ‘Western’ values (such as ensuring the political rights of citizens in borrowing countries) and to their own lack of influence within the institutions. Decision-making within them has barely changed, despite major shifts in the global economy.

However, none of this should undermine the important work of the Bretton Woods institutions. For example, in 1996, they jointly launched a Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative to tackle debt through a mix of reform and relief. By 2010, 32 countries had completed the scheme and were receiving full debt relief. Research and data produced by the IMF and World Bank are also widely used by UN bodies, national governments, NGOs and the private sector.

Yet, at the beginning of the millennium, global economic governance structures were a far cry from their founders’ vision. Diminished and sidelined, none of them appeared as central to the global economy as, say, Messrs Moody or Fitch.

Equal say?

% of IMF voting shares after reforms agreed in 2010
(not yet in force)



Crisis response

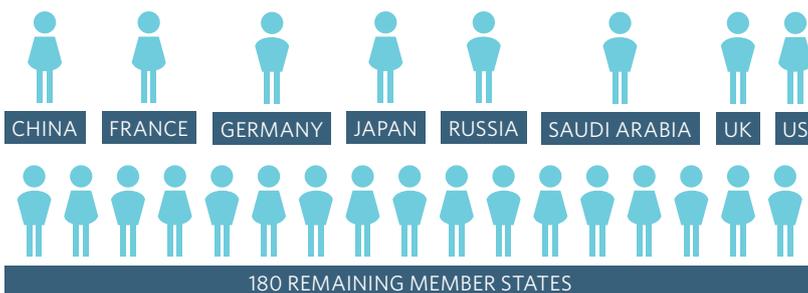
Then came the 2008 financial crisis. While certain parts of the UN had predicted this, the World Bank and IMF were largely caught off guard. Neither had expected a crash of this kind, nor had they warned against the risks of speculation on increasingly opaque financial products – neatly described by American social commentator Will Rogers in 1930 as “continually buying something that we never get from a man who never had it”. The institutions’ policies had also failed to do enough to shore up the most vulnerable economies.

Calls for coordinated global action were resurrected. This time, the drivers were not the victorious wartime Allies (although they are all still in the club), but rather the G20 – the world’s largest economies. Swiftly upgraded from a ministerial to a leaders’ forum, the G20 agreed some \$3bn in fiscal stimuli in 2008 (and a further \$1.1trn in 2009), promised to eschew protectionist measures and committed themselves to “advancing the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions”, placing particular emphasis on the IMF’s crucial role in providing stability and on the development assistance offered by the World Bank.

The immediate aftermath of the crisis did indeed see these organisations take on a new lease of life. In 2008, the IMF activated an emergency scheme for countries affected by the crisis. It has also provided hefty bailouts for Greece and Ireland, and continues to play a key role in the eurozone crisis. The World Bank delivered record levels of financial support, almost tripling lending and seeking to keep trade and investments afloat.

Number of Directors in World Bank Group

1 each: China, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UK, US
 17 shared between the remaining 180 member states (Total 25)



(Not) business as usual

Since then, global action has been limited. *Be Outraged*, a new publication by 12 leading economists and social scientists (see box opposite), argues that while the packages agreed in 2008 and 2009 helped to maintain global growth at 4% in 2010, their effect was shortlived as growth fell to 2.8% last year.

A lack of coordination has also meant that austerity programmes in one country can impede trade and growth prospects worldwide, with the resulting human costs of unemployment and poverty. Moreover, despite the commitments they made, nearly all G20 members have implemented some protectionist policies. Bailouts for banks and major firms certainly saved some jobs

and prevented chaos in the short term, but they also created imbalances by giving their recipients an unfair advantage and taking away incentives for efficiency. Above all, these measures were unable to prevent further shocks and contagion from affecting the world's poorest countries (see Cheick Sidi Diarra on page 12) and emerging markets, which had, by and large, been managing their economies effectively.

This has led to backsliding. In many places, stimulus and government action have been replaced by austerity and a focus on the private sector, even though both the Great Depression and the East Asian crisis of the late 1990s have shown that markets are not self-correcting.

Governance reform has also stalled. Initially, the G20 had made improving global institutions a priority. Some members, including the UK, even proposed a conference to design a post-Bretton Woods system. In 2009, a UN Commission of Experts, led by Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, produced a substantive report with recommendations for a bold and comprehensive agenda to tackle the global crisis and create a framework to promote stability in the future. They were adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly (see box).

But the report has barely registered and serious discussion of reform has faded away. This is a great shame. While the G20 has been able to take some decisive action, it has not yet shown the leadership, consistency or effectiveness to make a difference. It is a political forum which, ultimately, cannot produce outcomes with legal force or global buy-in. Nor can it implement its financial decisions without the IMF and other UN bodies. Moreover, although it accords more say to large emerging economies than the Bretton Woods institutions, none of these fora provide for meaningful input by smaller or poorer countries, in Europe and elsewhere, many of which are feeling the impacts of the crisis most keenly.

Now, more than ever, the global economic governance system needs reform to predict and respond to financial shocks more effectively, and to promote long-term development and stability. The UN – with its unique capacity to produce decisions with global legitimacy – must play a central role in this system, to ensure that economic challenges are addressed equitably, sustainably and in the context of the other pressing issues facing the world. As Sharan Burrow argues on page 8, we need growth, but not at any price. ●

The Stiglitz report

Recommendations to strengthen global economic governance

1. Establish a Global Economic Coordination Council, with adequate developing-country representation, at a level equivalent to the UN General Assembly and Security Council, to provide leadership and coordinate action on global economic issues.
2. Foster better international coordination by giving this Council a formal mandate over relevant bodies, including the World Bank, IMF and WTO.
3. Set up an International Panel of Experts to monitor and assess short- and long-term systemic risks, and to provide a source of expertise.
4. Improve the IMF's ability to provide independent and even-handed macroeconomic surveillance by moving away from a narrow focus on curbing inflation and towards promoting growth.
5. Strengthen the IMF's lending capacity to enable it to respond to increased demands.
6. Enhance the capacity of the World Bank and regional development banks to shift their focus to poverty alleviation and sustainable growth.
7. Reform both global institutions to increase developing-country representation, employ best practice in selecting senior management, and instill higher standards of transparency and accountability.
8. Ensure that development and planning ministries – not just finance ministries and central banks – are represented at the IMF and World Bank
9. Bring the WTO into the UN system and mandate it to assess states' stimulus and recovery packages systematically to avoid a return to the beggar-thy-neighbor policies that the creation of the WTO was intended to prevent.
10. Renew commitment by all countries to the original spirit of the Doha negotiations on multilateral trade, which currently risk descending into a one-size-fits-all approach solely concerned with market access instead of the intended focus on development.



Be Outraged: There are alternatives

This new publication by an international group of economists and social scientists argues that the narrow range of policies currently employed by governments are reducing growth and worsening poverty. They put forward a compelling case for alternatives with a focus on addressing poverty as the best route for escaping the economic crisis. A core concern is remedying the mismatch between the increasingly globalised world economy and the inadequacy of global governance structures. The book presents many of the recommendations made by the UN Commission of Experts on reforming the international financial system in a clear and engaging manner. It also shows how the alternatives could be financed.

Visit <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk> to download your free copy.



Archie Mackenzie, second from right, with Lord Halifax at the San Francisco conference in 1945. Photo courtesy of Michael Smith, Initiatives of Change

Tribute to Archie Mackenzie CBE

New World joins UNA-UK members and others around the world in celebrating the life of Archie Mackenzie, who died, aged 96, on 15 April 2012.

A career diplomat, Mackenzie played a pivotal role in the negotiations leading to the founding of the UN. He is thought to have been the last surviving British citizen to be present at the signing of the UN Charter in 1945. His outstanding contribution to the UN was recognised by UNA-UK at a major event in 2006 to mark the former's 60th anniversary.

By his own account, Mackenzie was not “a wholly orthodox member” of the diplomatic service. Having studied mental philosophy and modern greats at Glasgow and Oxford Universities, he had initially intended to become a teacher or a journalist. Then, after a scholarship to research “the ethical implications of democracy, with special reference to the work of moral rearmament” took him to Chicago and Harvard, he found himself in the US on the eve of the Second World War. The British Embassy in Washington, on the lookout for extra staff, offered him a temporary post. It led to a 32-year career with the Foreign Office.

Mackenzie started out as an assistant to Isaiah Berlin and their weekly political reports to London became essential reading in Whitehall. He soon took up diplomatic responsibilities, serving as spokesman for the British delegation at the Hot Springs Food and Agriculture Conference, and then at the Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco conferences. He later became first secretary to Sir Alexander Cadogan, the first British Ambassador to the UN.

One of Mackenzie's ‘unorthodoxies’ was never professing a preference as to where he should be posted. He served on four continents, including as British representative to the

UN Economic and Social Council, Ambassador to Tunisia and in Thailand, Cyprus, Burma, France and Yugoslavia. After his retirement in 1975, he was invited to assist Edward Heath on the Brandt Commission on international development, and was a member of the five-person drafting committee charged with producing what became the highly influential *Brandt Report*.

Mackenzie's early interest in morality led to an active role in the moral rearmament movement. This association raised eyebrows in some quarters of the Foreign Office. For Mackenzie, though, moral meditation was an important element of his service. Referring to the duplicity of Maclean and Burgess in his engaging autobiography, *Faith in Diplomacy*, he notes “cleverness is not enough; character is also vital”. He took his case to the Foreign Secretary and was entirely exonerated.

Well into his 80s, Mackenzie continued to seek opportunities to play a constructive role in international affairs. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, he was deeply involved in peacemaking and reconciliation initiatives. Throughout his life, he remained firmly committed to the notion that no issue was insurmountable if the problems and relationships of those sitting around the negotiating table could be addressed.

In a 2002 interview with ‘Initiatives for Change’, an organisation he was deeply committed to, Mackenzie, asked about his long life of service, simply said: “When I awake in the morning and look across Loch Lomond from our home on the eastern shore, my first thought is very often one of gratitude. Not achievement; not failure; not frustration; and certainly not boredom. Just gratitude.”

Supporters of the UN have much to thank him for.



© Ahmad Gharabli/AFP/Getty Images

Nuke-free Middle East possible without Israel?

Will the UN conference on the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in December 2012 include Israel? Will there be discussion of how its development of nuclear weapons has, for too long, contributed to the sense of injustice felt by other Middle Eastern countries, especially Iran, with regard to unfair pressure on their own nuclear programmes? Will it seek to monitor Israel's installations? Did I miss any reference in the Spring 2012 issue of *New World* to the role of Israel in contributing to regional and global conflict? My Jewish friends who suffered in the Holocaust also ask these questions.

As an 86-year-old UNA-UK member, I found it discouraging that in the feature "Which global event changed your world?" (*New World*, Spring 2012) the smallest space was given to a doctor referring to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. What would be the answer to a revised question: "What global event do you fear most could change the world?"

Dr Yvonne Craig
London

Editor's note: New World readers may be interested in UNA-UK's recent publication, Towards a more secure and WMD-free Middle East. Written for UNA-UK's nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament programme, Towards Zero, this report analyses the prospects for creating a WMD-free zone in the Middle East in the context of wider challenges, such as the asymmetrical nuclear capabilities in the region and international responses to them, as well as its history of conflict and human rights abuses. It accords particular attention to Israel and is available from www.una.org.uk

Don't dismiss population growth

The Spring 2012 issue of *New World* highlighted on its cover various global problems that put the idea of a sustainable future in jeopardy. At the head of its contents page, however, it misrepresents the 2011 UN Population Fund (UNFPA) report by reproducing the following excerpt: "It's overconsumption, not population growth, that is the fundamental problem." I say misrepresents because, although that line is in the report on page 94, it comes from a journalist and is not the position of the UNFPA.

In fact, the UNFPA has urged that population issues be included in the UN's Rio+20 sustainability conference as they are especially relevant to poor countries faced with climate change. Even now, says the UNFPA, 215 million women of child bearing age cannot get family planning advice, instruction and supplies. Long-term, the planet cannot sustain current levels of population. They need to be stabilised pretty soon and then slowly reduced to more manageable levels, everywhere, Britain included. Regrettably, population growth is not listed as one of the two main themes at Rio+20.

Keith Hindell
London

Editor's note: The journalist referred to above is Fred Pearce, a British environmental writer who has written reports for the UN Environment Programme, World Bank and other UN bodies. His comments were made in the context of a chapter entitled "Sharing and sustaining Earth's resources", which quoted several studies on the disproportionate impact on CO₂ emissions of rich nations with low population growth. The chapter itself reflects UNFPA's holistic approach to population issues, which stresses that issues such as fertility, health, poverty, patterns of production and consumption must not be viewed in isolation. New World apologises for any confusion caused. UNA-UK's UN Forum 2012 event will feature a major session on population (see page 14).



UNA-UK Annual General Meeting update

On 21 April 2012, over 50 UNA-UK members attended in the 18th Annual General Meeting of the company. At the meeting, members adopted the audited accounts for the year ended 30 June 2011, appointed Kingston Smith LLP as auditors and agreed the minutes of the previous AGM, held on 10 March 2011, and Extraordinary General Meeting held on 24 November 2011.

UNA-UK's Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, and Executive Director Phil Mulligan delivered reports to the membership, reflecting on the past year and outlining future plans. The successful application to the Charity Commission was also announced, before a question-and-answer session was held on topics submitted by members for discussion. These included membership recruitment and participation, publicity proposals, the Olympic Truce and Board arrangements for the new charitable company.

Awards for Distinguished Service were presented to six UNA-UK members who have made an outstanding contribution to the organisation:

- Robert Davies, Wales
- Ruth Dolman, Eastern Region
- Alec Gaines, Scotland
- Enid Lodge, North-West Region
- Anne Sieve, Southern Counties
- Jo Stocks, London & South-East

After the formal business was concluded, the results of the election for Trustees of the new charity from the four English geographic areas were announced:

- Luckshan Abey Suriya, North West and North East
- Gian Clare, Central and Eastern
- Roger Hallam, London and South-East
- Viv Williams, South and South West

To round off the event, a presentation on UNA-UK's new website, which is to be launched in June, was delivered by Ben Donaldson, UNA-UK Communications & Campaigns Officer.

For more details on all of the above, including profiles of those presented with distinguished service awards and the elected Trustees, visit www.una.org.uk

Send your letters to:

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London SW1A 2EL
email: samarasinghe@una.org.uk

The UN & the UK

This section features an update on UN-related developments in the UK and on UNA-UK's work with British policy-makers

Sir Mark Lyall Grant – the UN's response to the Arab Spring

On 2 May, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the UN held an event with Sir Mark Lyall Grant, UK Ambassador to the UN, who spoke on the UN's response to the Arab Spring. Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Chair of the UN APPG and a former UK Ambassador to the UN, chaired the event, while Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK Chairman and another of Sir Mark's predecessors, acted as a respondent. With collective Security Council experience spanning more than 20 years, the three diplomats took the opportunity to reflect on its evolving role. More than 120 UNA-UK members, NGO representatives, parliamentarians and diplomats participated in a wide-ranging discussion that covered issues including international justice, energy security and UN reform. An extract of Sir Mark's speech is printed below.

Traditionally, the UN Security Council spends two-thirds of its time on sub-Saharan Africa. But in the last year, the most difficult debates have been on Libya, Yemen, Sudan and Syria – not forgetting Israel/Palestine.

I don't need to explain the significance of the Arab Spring to this audience, but two points are worth making. Firstly, although similar impulses have instigated the uprisings – a desire for political participation and a demand for economic opportunity – the countries and societies across the region vary enormously in their wealth, traditions and institutions. They are therefore bound to move at different speeds and in different ways.

Countries such as Libya are holding elections for the first time ever. Reforms in Morocco and Jordan will take time. Change seems barely discernible in some of the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia. And in Syria, Bashar al-Assad will make every effort to hang on to power.

This means that we will need strategic patience – my second point. The Arab Spring was never going to be a quick fix. These are not our revolutions; we are supporting those struggling for their own freedoms and reforms. We should avoid the temptation to pick champions, and recognise that there will be many setbacks. As experience in Europe, Latin America and Africa has shown, democratisation is rarely linear.

There is understandable concern about the rise of political Islam in the region. The Muslim Brotherhood secured the majority of seats in Egypt's constituent parliament and the Salafists won 20%. In Tunisia and Morocco, Islamic parties have come out on top and they are likely to do well in Libya and Yemen too.

These are not our revolutions; we are supporting those struggling for their own freedoms and reforms

But the inspiration behind the region's upheavals has come from young people seeking a greater say in the way that they are governed and more economic opportunities. It is as much a clash of generations as of civilisations. Successful political parties know that if they are to meet these expectations they will need to free up the economy and attract investment from the West. And let's not forget that it was autocratic leaders like Gaddafi who fostered threats to international security.

Overall, I would argue that the UN's response to these events has been impressive. The UN Secretary-General, prepared to ignore criticism from major UN member states, has made a series of bold statements on Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, and powerful speeches on humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect.

The Human Rights Council suspended Libya, established a commission of

inquiry and effectively rejected Syria's candidature for membership. The General Assembly switched accreditation to the Libyan opposition and adopted, by an overwhelming majority, a human rights resolution on Syria. The Security Council referred Libya to the International Criminal Court and adopted wide-ranging sanctions on the regime before authorising a no-fly zone and all necessary means to protect civilians. Together, these constituted the most wide-ranging resolutions passed by the Council for more than 20 years.

There has, of course, been a backlash. Russia and China, along with some others, have argued that the military action in Libya went beyond what had been mandated by the Council's resolution, with the objective of regime change rather than civilian protection in mind. These criticisms are unjustified. During the final Council negotiations, it was made very clear what measures would be necessary to implement the resolution. However, the sentiment has made subsequent debates in the Council more difficult; Russia and China have twice vetoed resolutions on Syria, for example.

But the Council has not been paralysed by this backlash. It has mandated new UN missions in Libya and South Sudan, and in Yemen, a Council-supported envoy helped to broker the peace deal. Most encouragingly, the Council finally adopted two unanimous resolutions on Syria in April, offering full support for UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan's six-point peace plan and authorising a monitoring mission.

Certainly, the next few years will be difficult – the ongoing violence in Syria is deeply worrying – but democracy is messy and entails risks. Let's keep our eyes on the strategic trend, which is the opening of political space and a new culture of accountability. This is positive – and I expect it to remain so. ●

 Sir Mark's full speech is available at www.una.org.uk



Four diplomats at the UN APPG event on 2 May: Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK Chairman and UK Ambassador to the UN (1998-2003), Lord Hannay of Chiswick, UN APPG Chair and UK Ambassador to the UN (1990-95), Sir Mark Lyall Grant, current UK Ambassador to the UN, and Sir Crispin Tickell, UK Ambassador to the UN (1987-1990). © UNA-UK

UNA Youth campaigns for Arms Trade Treaty

On 25 April, the UN APPG and the APPG on Weapons and Protection of Civilians, hosted a lively parliamentary meeting on prospects for a strong Arms Trade Treaty. Co-chaired by Lord Hannay of Chiswick and Martin Caton MP, the event featured presentations by Alistair Burt, Foreign Office Minister for Counter Proliferation, and Anna MacDonald, Head of Arms Control at Oxfam, who outlined their objectives and expectations for the treaty negotiations which are due to begin at the UN in July. UNA Youth representatives used the opportunity to pose questions to the panel. They will now submit a set of recommendations for the UK's negotiating stance to the Foreign Office.

 Visit www.una.org.uk to read more

David Cameron to co-chair UN panel on Millennium Development Goals

UK Prime Minister David Cameron is set to co-chair a new UN panel tasked with exploring what should follow the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are due to expire in 2015.

UNA-UK welcomes this appointment, which represents an historic opportunity for the UK to shape the global development agenda. With less than three years remaining to achieve the goals, it is vital that the international community starts developing a post-MDG framework now. UNA-UK Chairman Sir Jeremy Greenstock had made representations to this effect to the UK International Development Secretary, Andrew Mitchell, urging him to take the lead in initiating a vigorous debate.

UNA-UK believes that the UK should use this opportunity to contribute to a more holistic approach to development. While economic growth must be part of the mix, progress should also be measured in terms of human rights, gender equality, sustainability and security. Details of the panel are due to be announced after the UN Rio+20 sustainability conference which will take place in June this year.

Lords Committee recommends abandoning 0.7% aid pledge

The House of Lords economic affairs committee has called on the government to drop its commitment to spend 0.7%

of gross national income on aid. The committee questioned the efficacy of enshrining the commitment in law, as well as the nature of the target itself, stating that aid spending should be judged on "effectiveness and value for money, not by whether a specific arbitrary spending target is reached". In recent months the government has backed away from passing the pledge into law, as promised by all parties during the 2010 election campaign, but reiterated its commitment to increasing the budget of the Department for International Development (DFID).

UK makes \$25m donation to the Food and Agriculture Organisation

DFID has donated \$25m to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), to help fund an innovative programme designed to build the capacity of farmers in developing countries to use up-to-date agriculture statistics. The donation will go towards the first phase of the programme, which will run until 2016. This comes as the new Director-General of the FAO, José Graziano da Silva, stressed the urgency of tackling hunger as part of sustainable development initiatives. ●



UNA-UK Executive Director Phil Mulligan on creating a post-MDGs framework

The London Olympics may well be the biggest event in the UK this year – discounting our own UN Forum on 14 July, of course – but the most important global gathering in 2012 will take place in Brazil: the UN's Rio+20 sustainable development summit.

The event offers an opportunity for world leaders to make an historic impact on sustainability and poverty reduction. However, to do that they will need to resist two temptations.

The first is to focus on a narrow definition of sustainability. A new global agreement on climate change to replace the Kyoto Protocol, however much it is needed, will not be achieved in the near future. But it is possible that a new set of 'sustainable development goals' could be agreed in Rio. These are set to cover oceans, food, energy, water, consumption and sustainable cities.

On the surface, the adoption of such goals might seem a positive step and one that is potentially achievable. Indeed, with the lack of a new global climate deal, it may be the face-saver that world leaders crave. However, the near conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) timetable cannot be ignored and it would be unhelpful for Rio to produce a new set of global goals in isolation from the need to revise international strategies and targets for poverty reduction. A far better outcome would be for the summit to produce a broad commitment on the new goals but for the detail of these to be developed alongside a much-needed revision of the MDGs.

Herein lies the second temptation. There are some who believe that we need to concentrate on delivering the MDGs, while others argue that we should be focusing on what will replace them in 2015 – the target date for achieving the goals. The reality is we need to do both. The future is determined not so much by what happens in the future but by what happens now.

The UK government should be commended for maintaining aid spending in a time of austerity and, through the work of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact, for trying to ensure spending is effective. But despite the UK being on target for the first time to meet a 40-year-old commitment of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on aid, the recent Queen's speech lacked a bill to enshrine this as a legal commitment.

We hope that Prime Minister David Cameron's role as co-chair of the UN's post-MDGs panel will make the UK's commitment to international aid unchallengeable by narrow-minded domestic lobbies. However, it is likely that the UK will favour an emphasis on economic growth as the main driver of poverty reduction and there is a danger that this will come at the expense of environmental and social considerations. If this is the case, there is more reason than ever to resist both temptations and to blend sustainability and poverty reduction into a new set of joint goals.

UNA-UK Members



UNA Edinburgh looks at the prospects for a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction

Every year since the 1970s, Egypt and Iran have called on the UN to initiate discussions on achieving a Middle East that is free of nuclear weapons. At the 2010 Review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), states parties finally resolved to act on this long-standing goal by seeking to hold a conference in 2012 that looks at the broader aim of abolishing weapons of mass destruction in the region. The government of Finland has been asked to host this event, which is scheduled to take place this December.

UNA Edinburgh has built up a strong track record of advocacy on nuclear issues. Using the international conference we held on 28 May at the Scottish Parliament (in partnership with Malcolm Chisholm MSP) as a starting point, we plan to act as a force for civil society leadership in this field.

While governments are bound by the rigours of international diplomacy, we feel very strongly that we can exert legitimate, democratic pressure by discussing the rationales for state decisions and their implications on everyday life and people. We wish, through this and other events, to provide the basis for a growing understanding of the nature and complexity of achieving a Middle East weapons of mass destruction-free zone (MEWMDZF) and, indeed, the abolition of all nuclear weapons worldwide.

We recognise that zone discussions would need to cover difficult issues, such as:

- Disarmament of all nuclear weapons in Israel's possession
- Abandonment of any nuclear weapons ambitions Iran may possess
- Removal of tactical nuclear bombs from the NATO base in south Turkey
- Demonstration of the absence of WMD on any US warships and warplanes based in the Middle East
- International verification of all these points, including support for the International Atomic Energy Agency Additional Protocol (which grants the Agency inspection authority) throughout the region.



Israelis demonstrate on 24 March 2012 against a possible military attack by their country on Iran
© Uriel Sinai/Getty Images

We believe that a MEWMDZF would make a major contribution to global security and strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. Progress made at the 2010 NPT Review Conference was hard-won, and we must do all we can to support these developments.

We are delighted that our conference gathered interest from around the world. Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK's Chairman, chaired the event. Ambassadors from Finland and Turkey and the First Secretary from the Russian Embassy gave presentations. So too did the Director of Palthink, the Centre for Strategic Studies in Gaza, and the President of the Israeli Centre of Law and Business in Ramat Gan, who is an expert on Iran. Unfortunately neither UNA-Iran or UNA-Syria were able to obtain visas so sent, instead, a DVD (from Iran) and a statement (from Syria). The former was viewed and the latter was read to the conference.

Thematic sessions were led by Andreas Persbo, Executive Director of the verification NGO VERTIC, who discussed how disarmament can be verified without revealing military secrets, and by Ted Seay

of the European Leadership Network. Dr Rebecca Johnson, Director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, provided an excellent summary of the day's discussions, outlining key concerns that states will need to address when they meet later in the year.

At the beginning of 2012, the US and Israel emphasised the necessity of ensuring Iran did not become a nuclear-weapon state. While we recognise that state-led negotiations are crucial to the achievement of this goal, we at UNA Edinburgh believe that people-to-people approaches must also be part of the diplomatic process.

We therefore ensured that a number of roundtable discussions, facilitated by Scottish and UK politicians, took place between the formal presentations. These sessions gave civil society representatives an opportunity to speak about their approaches to, and understandings of, the difficulties of establishing a MEWMDZF.

A report of the issues raised at the conference will be available in Arabic, English, Farsi, Finnish, Hebrew and Turkish. A copy will be available on the UNA Edinburgh website so that UNA members can continue the discussion online and within their branches. ●

Gari Donn is convenor of UNA Scotland and a member of the UNA-UK Board of Directors

UNA-UK Young Professionals



*Hayley Richardson, UNA-UK's Administrative Assistant, interviewed **Nick Dearden**, Director of the Jubilee Debt Campaign*

Jubilee 2000 was a landmark campaign for your organisation and did much to help raise public awareness about developing countries' debt. More than a decade on, what do you feel the campaign has achieved?

In 1998 when 70,000 people surrounded the G8 in Birmingham to call on leaders to drop unjust debt, few knew what the G8 was – or indeed the World Bank, International Monetary Fund or World Trade Organisation. Over the next 10 years, meetings of these institutions regularly attracted massive protests. Jubilee 2000 helped people realise how far global governance had strayed from the interests of ordinary people, and it initiated a real alliance between the dispossessed of the South and the disaffected of the North.

The last year has seen large-scale protests around the world, from the Occupy movement to the Arab uprisings. Do you think they will have a positive effect on debt relief issues?

The exciting thing for me is the growth of debt movements in Egypt and Tunisia. The Arab Spring has laid bare how unjust debts were accumulated while Western governments propped up dictators. There is a danger that 'debt recycling' will allow debt to go on being a tool of

control. Occupy is a reaction to the return of business as usual at the financial institutions that created the current debt crisis. The costs are being forced onto the public in a similar way to the developing-country debt crisis. Now at least, these issues are on the agenda.

In Western countries, has the call to 'drop the debt' been subsumed by the eurozone's woes?

In many ways, the eurozone crisis supports everything we've always said about the controlling role of debt. But it also feels like 'drop the debt' is no longer sufficient as a call. Undoubtedly, debts need to be cancelled – in Europe as well as the South – however, simply cancelling debt doesn't prevent it from accumulating again. The issues are much broader: we need to replace dependency on debt with a progressive tax system and make finance work in the public interest.

What's your position on recent calls for the UK government to drop its commitment to giving 0.7% of GNI in aid?

Aid is both the biggest achievement and biggest failure of UK NGOs in the last 10 years. All political parties have been persuaded to reach this outdated target (it was first agreed by the UN General

Assembly in 1970) on the basis that it's a form of charity. Instead, we should have explained that aid is actually a form of redistribution and restitution, which must be accompanied by structural changes. There are huge problems with seeing aid as the answer to global poverty, especially when aid is pushed through the financial markets, perpetuating the very cause of so much poverty. Rather than defending the need for charity, we must completely retell the need for development.

What does JDC see as the most important reform needed to our financial institutions?

I don't think there's a single silver bullet. We need massive debt cancellation South and North, we need to understand that the private sector is not always and everywhere better than the public sector – far from it. We need publicly controlled banks and capital controls to allow governments to control money in the national interest. We need tax reforms to allow the sort of wealth redistribution any decent society needs. None of this can be brought about without large mobilisations of people. Democracy requires people having some control over their lives, their societies and, therefore, their economies.

What role do you think the UN should play in global economic governance?

We need to replace the institutions that currently control the global economy with properly accountable structures. That cannot happen anywhere but the UN. The UN has been degraded and marginalised for years because it was seen as a threat to the powerful – it cannot play a progressive role without change. We, as NGOs, civil society and global citizens, need to see the UN as something worth fighting for. We need to campaign for change at the UN – in particular more involvement by the global South at that level. ●

Nick Dearden is the Executive Director of Jubilee Debt Campaign, an organisation campaigning for the cancellation of unjust debts that keep millions in poverty



*Nick Dearden being interviewed during the Put People First tour of the city in 2009 to coincide with the G20 meeting in London
© Jubilee Debt Campaign*



Launching the next generation of UNA-UK

On 10 March, over 200 students from schools across the UK gathered at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organisation in London for UNA-UK's inaugural Model UN schools tournament, Uniting the Nations. The event launched UNA-UK's new Generation United Nations programme, which aims to engage 13- to 18-year-olds and their schools in the work of the UN (see page opposite).

The theme of the tournament was "Making a reality of the Olympic Truce". Based on the traditions of the ancient Olympic Games, the Olympic Truce centres on the idea of ceasing hostilities for the duration of the Games to enable humanitarian aid and facilitate dialogue between warring parties.

"As we walked into the IMO, we were immediately immersed in a sea of ambassadors; amendments were being argued and alliances were forming"

—Louis, participant

Students heard from Bill Morris, London 2012 Director of Ceremonies, Education and Live Sites, who outlined the breadth of Truce activities taking place around the UK, and from Conrad Bailey of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who described how the UK worked to secure the support of all 193 UN member states for a UN General Assembly resolution on the Truce.



All photos © UNA-UK/Mark Makela

Afterwards, students were split into six UN Security Council committees. Representing country ambassadors, they discussed how the ideals of the Olympic Truce could be used to build a safer, fairer and more sustainable world for us all. Each country delegation had two minutes to deliver an opening statement, in which thoughtful responses to the resolution were presented. The formal debate was an opportunity for the participants, many of whom had never taken part in a Model UN event, to show off their impressive background research and practise their diplomatic skills. Much informal lobbying took place in between formal sessions and over lunch, where many unlikely alliances blossomed to propose amendments.

"This event has fired them up now because they're more interested in world affairs and how decisions are made by world leaders"

—Teacher

As in real life, not all negotiations led to a Security Council resolution – many fell foul of a veto by one or more of the Council's permanent members – but every committee came up with a host of ideas on peace

and security, human rights protection and international development. The calibre of debate was incredibly high and the buzz throughout the day was palpable.



Five students from each committee were awarded prizes, and bronze, silver and gold awards were given to the best performing schools. The top prize – a trip to the UN headquarters in New York – was won by Josh Bendel, Louis Bostock-Williams and Rory Maclean from Ellesmere College, Shropshire.

 A film showcasing the best bits of the day is available from www.una.org.uk

UNA-UK would like to thank the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Big Lottery Fund, London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the International Maritime Organisation for their generous support of this event



Join Generation United Nations

Generation United Nations is the best way for young people (aged 13 to 18) and schools to engage with international affairs.

Young people are at the heart of UNA-UK's work. We strive to stimulate interest in the UN and support teaching and learning about the issues it tackles, through the formal curriculum, Model UN activities and innovative resources, events and campaigns.

Our new Generation United Nations programme is designed to give young people the chance to build key skills and demonstrate an active interest in global affairs – a valuable asset to their CV, no matter what career they choose. Both students and schools can join.

Generation United Nations students receive:

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the UK's only publication devoted to the UN – four times a year

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with Model UN hints, network notices and career tips

Priority booking

for Model UN and other UNA-UK events

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in UNA-UK school competitions

Access to our university members and branches

for advice on what and where to study

Regular campaign actions

to help build a safer, fairer and more sustainable world

Generation United Nations schools receive:

A 'Member of Generation United Nations' logo and web banner

UNA-UK and UN teaching resources

The opportunity to advertise their own activities

and events to the network

All of the above student benefits for free for a selected teacher

Joining is quick and easy:

visit **www.una.org.uk**

or **contact us on 020 7766 3456**

or **membership@una.org.uk**

UN Forum 2012

**We can
create a safer,
fairer, more
sustainable
world**



UN Forum 2012 is the largest public event on the United Nations to be held in the UK this year - an unmissable day for anyone interested in international affairs.

The event will bring together UN experts, policy-makers and people from all walks of life to discuss some of the pressing challenges facing the international community - from intractable conflicts to population growth - and produce innovative ideas on how to build a safer, fairer and more sustainable world.

**Saturday 14 July 2012, 0930-1800
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UNA-UK