

URGENT: DIPLOMACY NEEDED

**Conflict. Climate.
Disarmament. Development.
*Are global solutions still possible?***

WITH Justine Greening on international development / Stanley Johnson on environmental protection
Paul Ingram on nuclear disarmament / Alexa van Sickle in conversation with Iraq inspector Rolf Ekéus

UNA-UK is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the United Nations and a grassroots movement campaigning for a safer, fairer and more sustainable world

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- Connecting people to its mission
- Influencing decision-makers to support its goals
- Generating ideas on how to make it more effective

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Members debate pressing UN issues with global experts at UNA-UK's sold-out UN Forum event in 2010 © UNA-UK / Mark Makela



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"The United Nations is a solid structure upon which we can build a better world... If we fail to use it, we shall betray all those who have died so that we [could] create it" US President Truman on signing the UN Charter in June 1945

Released to coincide with UN Day on 24 October 2013, this Special Issue of New World looks at some of the biggest challenges facing the international community and asks whether global solutions are still possible

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Urgent: diplomacy needed

Natalie Samarasinghe on how we can bridge the diplomatic deficit

The year 2015 could prove a turning point for the world. The international community has set itself an ambitious to-do list, with a fundamental renegotiation of international development goals, a major review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and discussions on a global climate framework all scheduled to take place. Together, they have the potential to alter radically the global landscape.

In the UK, those areas with domestic resonance – how much to spend on aid, whether to pursue shale gas extraction and the future of the Trident nuclear weapons system – will come under scrutiny in the run-up to 2015. Scotland, which is home to the Trident naval base, will hold an independence referendum in 2014. The UK's general election is scheduled for the following year. At UNA-UK's 2013 Policy Conference, members from around the country discussed the interplay between the national and global dimensions of these issues, and the prospects for action at either level.

This special issue of *New World* continues these debates. In our main essay, International Development Secretary Justine Greening sets out the UK's hopes for the post-2015 agenda (pages 6–8). Our briefing on pages 10–13 looks at the trajectory of the Millennium Development Goals. On pages 16–18, nuclear expert Paul Ingram argues that global disarmament must be the most important measure of action on Trident renewal. Pages 21–23 provide a forecast for the 2015 climate talks, while conservationist and former MEP Stanley Johnson considers the achievements and shortcomings of UN environmental action on pages 24–26. And as UN chemical weapons inspectors begin their work in Syria, we feature an interview with Rolf Ekéus, who headed the Iraq WMD inspection team in the 1990s (pages 19–20).

The diplomatic deficit

During the first decade of this century, both progressive and regressive trends



A member of a UN team collects samples from a site in Ghouta on the outskirts of Syrian capital Damascus, where an attack killed hundreds of people on 21 August. The team later confirmed that chemical weapons had been used there. Following UN Security Council Resolution 2118, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) began work in Syria on 1 October. Since its creation in 1997, the OPCW has overseen the destruction of some three-quarters of all the declared chemical weapons in the world.

© Ammar al-Arbini/AFP/Getty Images

occurred in parallel. The emergence of development goals and the responsibility to protect principle sat alongside the 'war on terror' and the backsliding on absolute taboos such as torture.

Today, there are fewer drivers of progressive action. Governments have become reluctant to look outwards, focused as they have been on dealing with the fall-out from slower growth and recession. Many of their citizens agree. Now that we are all feeling the pinch, we are less keen to take long-term or global action.

People around the world are also losing confidence in the ability of politicians and institutions to deliver tangible outcomes for their lives. Increasingly, they are taking

action on the streets and online. Few governments have reacted appropriately.

The scale and pace of change has put states on the back foot. On climate change, even the best outcome realistically in sight for 2015 falls far short of what is needed. Development systems are still stuck in a North-South, top-down paradigm that sits uneasily with the spread of economic and popular power. Post-Cold War military postures don't match modern security threats.

Together, these factors have produced a severe deficit in diplomacy. Pressing issues like nuclear disarmament have been kicked down the road while others, notably the search for a comprehensive

Arab-Israeli peace settlement, appear to have been abandoned entirely.

Lessons from Syria?

So how do we move forward? For over two years, the bloodshed in Syria has served as a grim reminder of the consequences of diplomatic stagnation. But even in this seemingly intractable situation, movement is possible.

As *New World* goes to press, UN weapons inspectors report that the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons is underway. The past weeks have seen the likelihood of international military intervention increase and recede, following the reported chemical attack that killed hundreds of people on the

outskirts of Damascus on 21 August. A UN report has since confirmed that the nerve agent sarin was used.

The unacceptability of chemical weapons is a near-universal norm, with an international convention on their prohibition and destruction. Their use is also listed as a war crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Even when international progress is slow, popular opinion and national leadership matter

Last year, President Obama described them as a "red line" for the US on Syria, although he was less clear on what the consequences of crossing this line might be. After 21 August, calls for the use of force grew louder. A clutch of countries within and outside the region, such as Qatar and the UK, were supportive. But the UK Parliament (narrowly) rejected the military course. Many believed the US Congress would do the same. In both countries, public opinion fell more clearly on the non-intervention side.

In the end, this option was avoided as the US and Russia seized a diplomatic exit route whereby Syria would agree to disarm under the auspices of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The plan was formalised by the Security Council through Resolution 2118 in a welcome return to unanimity.

While the destruction of Syria's stockpile – one of the largest in the world – is a contribution to global security, the central concerns of arresting the suffering of civilians and the implosion of Syria remain unaddressed. UNA-UK hopes that the Council's strong statement on humanitarian access and the scheduling of peace talks for November are signs of renewed engagement.

Syrians living in fear are entitled to wonder what impact, if any, the chemical weapons deal will have on their day-to-day lives. They could rightly ask why the international community was able to act so quickly on this issue, but not on over 100,000 casualties from conventional arms. Nonetheless, the episode has demonstrated that diplomacy can work, that public opinion counts, and that the UN has important tools, like the OPCW, that can be called upon.

Two-way leadership

Public opinion can be an important force, for better or worse, in the international arena. Large grassroots movements have been at the heart of advances such as the

cluster munitions ban and the Arms Trade Treaty, adopted in April and now signed by a majority of UN member states.

Policymakers out of step with the public can be caught off guard. For years, UK officials dismissed anti-nuclear test campaigners as naïve, pointing to the supposed impossibility of other states giving them up. Then, Russia, France and the US gave in to public pressure. They instituted moratoria, clearing the path for negotiations on an international test-ban treaty. The UK scrambled to adapt its position (and faced a steep bill for a planned nuclear test that had to be aborted).

But progressive government is necessary too. With economic pressures at home, people may call for cuts to development spending or contributions to peacekeeping. They may prefer short-term outcomes such as lower energy bills to long-term investments in renewable infrastructure.

There was strong popular support for the death penalty at the time it was abolished in the UK, Germany and France. Since then, there has been a continuing decline in public approval of capital punishment and events like the 2005 London bombings or Anders Breivik shootings in Norway don't appear to have had a lasting effect on this trend.

From local to global and back

When a critical number of countries is reached, national action can produce a global ripple effect. In the 1970s, a number of states responded to public campaigns and scientific studies by regulating chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). By 1987, the Montreal Protocol, an international treaty on reducing CFCs, had been established. Two years later, the European Community decided to ban CFC production and the following year, a global target of eliminating them by 2000 was agreed.

Even when international progress is slow, popular opinion and national leadership matter. Think of the shift in perceptions of nuclear weapons, from legitimate weapons in the 1950s, to a necessary evil in the 1980s, to the modern-day consensus that disarmament is essential, albeit difficult to achieve.

At UNA-UK, we seek to drive action by stimulating debate on the alignment of global and local interests, and calling for international dialogue, especially on the hardest issues. Above all, we push for UN mechanisms to be central to these discussions. They may be imperfect, but they have shaped what is now an undisputed norm – that of an international community expected to tackle shared global challenges and obliged to use constructive diplomacy to find compromises. ●



Justine Greening meets schoolchildren in the Turkana region of northern Kenya © DFID

A UK perspective on the post-2015 development agenda

*In our main essay, **Justine Greening**, UK Secretary of State for International Development, says that agreeing lowest common denominator goals is simply not an option. She calls for gender equality, accountable governments, human rights and the absence of conflict to be at the heart of the new framework*

This article appears as a foreword to UNA-UK's new publication, Global development goals: Leaving no one behind, available via www.una.org.uk

Almost 15 years ago, the international community came together to agree some simple, powerful objectives. No one should live on under \$1.25 a day. Denying girls an education isn't acceptable. The terrible scale of deaths from malaria and HIV/AIDS must be addressed. These were things we could agree to tackle together, and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were born.

These goals drove over a decade of remarkable progress. Today the international community faces a renewed test. The end date for the MDGs is 2015, by which time we will judge huge progress on the commitments we made in the Millennium Declaration. I'm really proud of the contribution the British government is making, first and foremost through dedicating 0.7 per cent of our GNI to overseas development assistance, and also with our development programmes all over the world. For example, the UK has helped to eradicate smallpox and reduce polio cases from 350,000 a year in 1988 to just 223 last year. This is a huge achievement.

To keep building on this progress after 2015 means asking: what comes next?

The international community now has to agree which challenges are the most important, most transformational in tackling extreme poverty and therefore deserve our combined effort. We have to decide new goals, new targets, and new ways of working together in global partnership.

With one in eight people still hungry, one in three women beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime, and four billion people lacking access to fair and functioning justice systems, it is simply not an option to fail to agree a new development framework. Nor is agreeing lowest common denominator goals on easy or less contentious topics, rather than tackling the issues that really make a difference. Bringing the international community together to one view on development will be tough, but it is a test we must meet.

Tackling the challenges that matter

Our starting point should be looking at what the Millennium Development Goals didn't tackle, addressing the issues most important to people living in poverty and how the world has changed since, with fresh debates on sustainability. The issues that I heard raised time and again are those of violence and insecurity, lack of voice, poor governance, human rights violations, and people's drive for jobs and employment.

The rule of law, safety, having a say in political processes, freedom from violence and corruption – these issues are often called enablers of development. And it's true that without them, development is far harder to make happen. We can see this in the fact that fragile and conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and South Sudan are the furthest off track from achieving the MDGs.

But when we ask poor people themselves what they value most it's a job, it's knowing that their families are safe in their own homes, that their children can get to school in safety, that they have a voice in political processes, that their governments listen, that they won't be asked for bribes by local officials and police. These messages have rung out loud and clear from projects like MYWorld and Participate that have been gathering views from around the world on what the post-2015 development framework should look like. Clearly, freedom from violence and from corruption, transparent government, accountable public services, and access to

justice are vitally important in their own right as well as important enablers. These are the things that those in poverty really care about.

The UK Prime Minister has called these issues the "golden thread" of development – the conditions that enable open economies and open societies to thrive. The crucial building blocks of accountable and transparent governments, the absence of conflict and corruption, and the presence of rights and freedoms build the platform for the eradication of poverty.

When we ask poor people themselves what they value most it's a job, it's knowing that their families are safe in their own homes

This was at the heart of the Millennium Declaration. In 2000, we declared that "we are determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world" and resolved to give everyone a life free from "the fear of violence, oppression or injustice". Likewise, the importance of peace for sustainable development was underlined at the Rio+20 conference in 2012, when we reaffirmed "the importance of freedom, peace and security" in an outcome document entitled 'The Future We Want'. The time is now ripe to take the next big step with the post-2015 framework to translate these ambitions into a reality for people in poverty the world over.

Goals and indicators

Some have argued that these vitally important issues are not measurable, and that we cannot develop concrete indicators by which to track our progress.

However, the UN High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which the Prime Minister co-chaired alongside President Sirleaf of Liberia and President Yudhoyono of Indonesia, has demonstrated that we can form clear, measurable goals, targets and indicators with which to measure progress and hold ourselves to account.

In its recent bold report, the Panel recommended 12 goals; two of which were "ensure good governance and effective institutions" and "ensure stable and peaceful societies". With targets on reducing violent deaths, eliminating violence against children, building accessible and independent justice institutions, stemming the stressors that lead to conflict, and enhancing security forces, police and judiciary, the Panel put paid to the argument that these issues cannot be measured. We know that these issues are measurable, and can be tracked and followed just as today we track how many kids attend school and how many people live on under \$1.25 a day. >>

Polio – a 99% decrease

Worldwide cases

1988	2012
350,000	223

The UK has committed £300m to eradicating polio by 2018. It is the second largest government donor to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Source: DFID



An estimated 290 million people in India do not have access to electricity. Supported by the UK government, the Lighting a Billion Lives programme trains and empowers women across rural India to run solar charging stations. The project has brought light to over a million people and 2,400 villages since 2008. It has also enabled women to work longer days, earning more money to support their families © TERI/Ahona Datta Gupta

>> Girls and women

I am also personally committed to securing a strong focus on gender equality in the new development framework. Violence against girls and women is a global pandemic, with one in three girls and women in the developing world beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. And while women perform 66 per cent of the world's work, they earn only 10 per cent of the income. These statistics are stark reminders of the extent to which girls and women are locked out of development. I believe that only if we address issues of voice, choice and control for girls and women in the post-2015 framework will it have the potential to end poverty in our lifetime.

The High-Level Panel set a high bar of ambition for girls and women, recommending targets on child

marriage, violence against women, and equal rights to open bank accounts and own property. I will be working hard with partners around the world to secure a similarly strong message in the final development framework agreed for 2015 onwards.

Our highest common ambition

In shaping the new development framework, we have a serious responsibility – to stretch for our highest common ambition, rather than the lowest common denominator. The High-Level Panel showed the way in this approach. The question is whether UN member states can come together again and address the difficult challenges of development. It can be done, it must be done, and the UK will play its part. ●

Global development goals: Leaving no one behind

With contributions from more than 50 experts and practitioners, this new UNA-UK publication, produced in collaboration with Witan Media, analyses the context in which the MDGs were developed, the progress made to date, the remaining challenges and lessons learned. It also provides recommendations for the post-2015 development agenda, including:

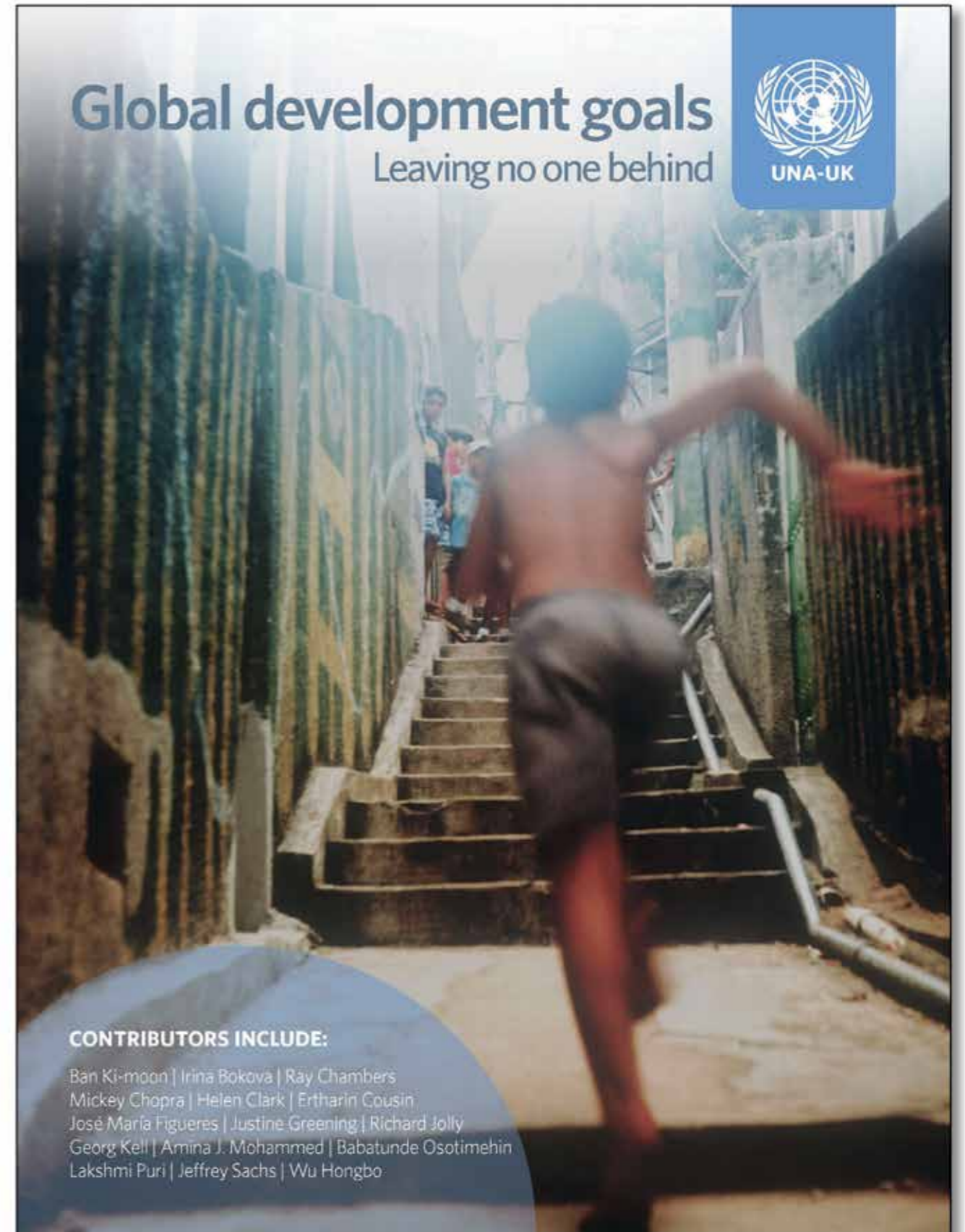
- Retaining the MDGs' simplicity and focus on poverty, within the broader context of security, development, human rights and good governance
- Recognising the need for growth and development to occur within planetary boundaries
- Ensuring the goals have enough flexibility to be adjusted to national and local realities
- Investing in public services and infrastructure to support development gains and local empowerment
- Emphasising decent work, knowledge- and skills-based education, and social protection
- Improving mechanisms and partnerships for

financing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating the new development agenda

- Developing methods for local initiatives to be shared, scaled-up and replicated, between and within countries
- Fostering a global outlook in policymaking among governments and publics

The publication features articles by Ban Ki-moon, Helen Clark, Ertharin Cousin, José María Figueres, Justine Greening, Richard Jolly, Amina Mohammed, Babatunde Osotimehin, Lakshmi Puri, Jeffrey Sachs, Jaime Saavedra-Chanduvi and Wu Hongbo. It was edited by Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK's Executive Director.

Hard copies of the publication have been sent to all UNA-UK members. It is also available via www.una.org.uk



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Lakshmi Puri | Jeffrey Sachs | Wu Hongbo

Analysis and recommendations on the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda from the leading participants and commentators.

Global development goals: Leaving no one behind is an official UNA-UK publication, published by Witan Media. If you would like to receive a copy, please contact geraldine.brennan@witanmedia.com



The development challenge

On 25 September, at the UN Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 development agenda, world leaders endorsed the creation of a single framework and set of goals on poverty eradication and sustainable development. They also reaffirmed their commitment to accelerating progress towards achieving the existing goals by their 2015 deadline

This briefing provides an update on MDG progress to date, the context in which the new development agenda is being created, and recommendations on the road ahead



Women in Bongouanou, Côte d'Ivoire, during a prenatal medical consultation © UN Photo/Hien Macline

In 2000, Kofi Annan, then-UN Secretary-General, addressed world leaders at the Millennium Summit with the following words: “in an age when human beings have learned the code of human life and can transmit their knowledge in seconds from one continent to another, no mother in the world can understand why her child should be left to die of malnutrition or preventable disease.” The Summit saw the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, a set of progressive proposals for the new century.

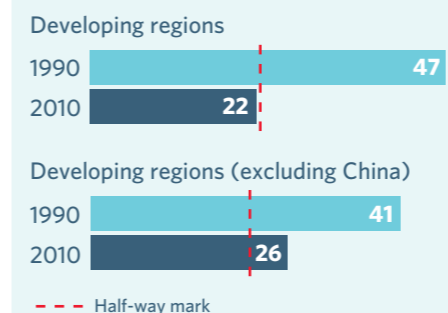
The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight time-bound goals, with targets and measures, each of which aims to significantly ameliorate development challenges by 2015. They have been hailed as the most ambitious and focused development effort by the international community, providing a coherent blueprint for all countries agreed through a series of UN summits.

Progress to date

At the global level, several of the MDG targets have already been met or are within close reach. But accelerated progress is needed in many areas.

The world reached its target of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty five years ahead of schedule. Around 700 million fewer people lived on less than \$1.25 a day in 2010 than in 1990, with every developing region making progress. However, much of this progress can be attributed to a clutch of emerging economies, most notably China. Globally, 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty. Even more survive just above that level, with 60 per cent of workers in the developing world making under \$4 a day.

% people living on <\$1.25/day



Source: Millennium Development Goals Report 2013

The target to halve the proportion of those suffering from hunger is within reach, as this has fallen from 23.2 per cent in 1990–1992 to 14.9 per cent in 2010–2012. But progress has slowed, in part due to the economic crisis. One in eight people – some 870 million – remains chronically under-nourished. At nearly one-third, the percentage of severely underweight children aged five and below is highest in southern Asia.

Although the number of children not receiving primary education declined by almost half over the past decade, from 102 million in 2000 to 57 million in 2011, the goal of universal primary education will be missed if current trends continue. Poor, female and rural children continue to fare less well than their counterparts.

Gender parity is closest to being achieved at the primary level but just two out of 130 countries included in the MDGs have achieved this target at all levels of education. Advances in gender empowerment outside

primary school – in employment, social protection and decision-making – have been far less encouraging.

While big gains have been made in child survival, with deaths per 1,000 live births dropping from 87 in 1990 to 51 in 2011, the reduction target of two-thirds is still some way off. In sub-Saharan Africa, the worst-affected region, one in nine children dies before their fifth birthday. A growing proportion of these deaths occur at or around the time of birth – a trend present in all developing regions.

According to the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2014 study

128 ECONOMIES

have at least one legal difference restricting women's economic opportunities

Like child mortality, maternal mortality is overwhelmingly the result of preventable causes. Although the ratio of deaths per 100,000 live births has declined by nearly half worldwide, the 75 per cent target looks out of reach. The picture is similar for family planning. Access and use has increased in all regions, but some 140 million women still have an unmet need.

Mortality rates from measles, tuberculosis and malaria have fallen markedly, with tens of millions of lives saved during the first decade of the new millennium. New HIV infections are declining but 2.5 million people still contract the disease each year. More of them are receiving antiretroviral therapy than ever before. The target of universal access was missed in 2010 but remains in sight for 2015. As with all health targets, impressive gains could be reversed if momentum is not maintained.

Nearly two billion people gained access to adequate sanitation over the past two decades. But another billion must be reached for the sanitation goal to be achieved. During the same period, 2.1 billion people gained access to improved sources of drinking water. That MDG target has been met well ahead of schedule.

So too has the target to improve the living conditions of 100 million slum dwellers. Twice that number now have better housing, sanitation and water. However, the absolute number of people in slums has risen.

Modest progress has been made on increasing the coverage of protected land and marine areas. Yet environmental sustainability continues to be under severe threat around the world. After a small blip during the 2008–2009 financial crisis, carbon emissions are back on the rise – up 46 per cent on 1990 levels. Forests are disappearing at an alarming rate and fish stocks are now below the level at which they can produce sustainable yields. Bird and animal species are moving towards extinction at an ever-faster pace.

Official development assistance (ODA) fell for the second consecutive year in 2012. Only five donors have met (and exceeded) the long-standing target of giving 0.7 per cent of GNI in aid: Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. (The UK has pledged to reach this target in 2013–14.) There have been some improvements in trade, with duty-free access to rich countries increasing and tariffs and debt service ratios declining. But a balanced, development-oriented >>

ILLUSTRATIVE GOALS AND TARGETS

POST-2015

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
|  1. End poverty |  2. Empower girls and women and achieve gender equality |  3. Provide quality education and lifelong learning |
|  4. Ensure healthy lives |  5. Ensure food security and good nutrition |  6. Achieve universal access to water and sanitation |
|  7. Secure sustainable energy |  8. Create jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth |  9. Manage natural resource assets sustainably |
|  10. Ensure good governance and effective institutions |  11. Ensure stable and peaceful societies |  12. Create a global enabling environment and catalyse long-term finance |

Source: Report of the UN High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

>> conclusion of the World Trade Organization's Doha Round of negotiations remains elusive. And least-developed countries in particular lack access to technology and medicine.

Behind the numbers

Uneven progress

Progress towards the MDGs varies greatly between and within regions and countries. For instance, at the regional level, East Asia has been the best performer. From a starting point similar to South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa in 1990, it has attained most of the MDG targets. But 18 of its countries are unlikely to meet the target to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

Sub-Saharan Africa

While many targets are off track in the region, it should be noted that it had the furthest to travel when the Goals were adopted in 2000, and that substantive gains have been made. Hunger, new HIV infections and maternal mortality have all receded. Of all developing regions, sub-Saharan Africa has made the biggest leap in areas such as primary school enrolment and child mortality.

Not counted?

In all regions, people who are elderly, disabled or from a rural, minority or conflict-affected community have fared less well on the whole. Differences in progress between males and females, rural and urban dwellers are monitored, but MDG data are not disaggregated by any other factors.

A success story?

The first decade of the MDGs has seen significant improvements in the lives of millions of people around the world. It is not easy to measure definitively the Goals' impact, as other factors, such as economic growth have contributed to their achievement. What is clear is that the MDGs have generated an unprecedented degree of consensus on development priorities, above all poverty reduction.

But a number of shortcomings are evident. The focus on aggregate targets has masked inequalities between and within states, especially in relation to vulnerable groups. In certain countries, goals have been met nationally with little change for the poorest, raising concerns that the framework has incentivised decision-makers and donors to pursue the easiest gains, instead of focusing on those hardest to reach.

The Goals have been described as prioritising quantity over quality, and omitting important development challenges such as tackling non-communicable diseases, which kill more people than HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. They have also been criticised for being too modest – aiming to improve conditions for just a small proportion of slum dwellers for example – and rooted in existing development trends, and for reflecting a top-down, North-to-South paradigm that marginalises local participation.

The road to 2015 and beyond

In May 2013, the UN High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released its much-anticipated report, which set out a framework for 2015–2030 aimed at eradicating poverty and remedying these shortcomings. It identified five transformational shifts – addressing inequalities, sustainable production and consumption, job creation and inclusive growth, peaceful and open

societies and “a new spirit of solidarity, co-operation and mutual accountability”. As part of this framework, the report proposed 12 illustrative goals. It also called for disaggregated data to be used when assessing progress and for targets to be considered achieved only if they are met for all relevant income and social groups.

At the UN Special Event in September 2013, world leaders resolved to accelerate progress on the Goals, calling for increased efforts on gender empowerment, reaching the 0.7 per cent GNI aid target and strengthening partnerships. They also agreed to create a new single set of goals for poverty reduction and sustainable development, meaning the processes for creating the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals (agreed at the Rio+20 Summit in 2012) will have to come together before 2015. This new development framework is to be universal in nature and applicable to all countries, with targets on peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights. Intergovernmental negotiations are to begin at the UN next September.

UNA-UK has called for this process to include a strong focus on how the new framework will be financed, what institutional reforms will be needed, what

opportunities there will be for ongoing public participation, and how the framework will relate to discussions on a global climate agreement, also scheduled for 2015.

UNA-UK recommendations

UNA-UK will continue to report on developments in the lead-up to 2015. To inform global discussions, the Association has produced a major publication entitled *Global development goals: Leaving no one behind*. With contributions from over 50 experts and practitioners, the publication analyses progress, gaps and lessons learned for each goal, as well as for cross-cutting themes such as the role of business and particular needs of landlocked developing countries. It also provides recommendations for the new framework, including:

- Retaining the simplicity and focus of the MDGs, within the broader context of security, development, human rights and good governance
- Recognising the need for economic growth to occur within planetary boundaries
- Ensuring the goals have enough flexibility to be adjusted to national and local realities and needs, and creating inclusive processes for making such adjustments
- Investing in public services and infrastructure to support development gains and empower local and national governments
- Emphasising decent work, knowledge- and skills-based education, and social protection
- Strengthening existing and forging new partnerships for financing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating the new development agenda
- Supporting better data collection and analysis
- Developing methods for local initiatives to be shared, scaled-up and replicated, both between and within countries
- Developing proposals to extend the reach of existing technological innovations and support new ones

Fostering a global outlook

Underlying all of these recommendations is the need to foster a global outlook in decision-making at the local and national levels. The post-2015 framework is being developed in a very different environment to the MDGs. The period since 2000 has seen a shift in the global economic balance. The financial crisis has hit developed and developing countries. A large proportion of the world's extremely poor people now live in middle-income countries. The impact on poverty of conflict, poor governance, inequality, climate change and environmental degradation are more widely understood and accepted.

According to the International Monetary Fund, foreign direct investment, remittances and portfolio equity flows have all overtaken ODA. While aid remains a life-saving tool, responsible business, immigration and investment policies are equally important.

For governments, it has been a difficult period, characterised by the need to respond to immediate challenges as well as the increasing urgency of tackling long-term ones. At the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the World Summit in 2005, world leaders agreed sweeping international agendas and reform programmes. This task will be much harder in 2015 unless governments and publics recognise that an ambitious, achievable development framework is in everyone's interest. ●

The world in 2030 Apocalypse then?

If trends continue

- Over 15 per cent of the population still lives on less than \$1.25 a day
- Increased demand, bad policies and waste see food prices – and hunger – soar
- The richest 1 per cent of the world's population still owns some 40 per cent of global wealth.
- Malaria, tuberculosis and HIV mortality increases as funding and focus dries up
- Rural communities are increasingly disconnected, while cities have growing numbers of slum dwellers
- There is mass unemployment, with young people particularly hard hit
- There is a 40 per cent shortfall in fresh drinking water
- Most ecosystems are now degraded and most fish stocks overexploited

If ambitious new goals are implemented

- There are 1.2 billion fewer people going hungry and living in extreme poverty
- 100 million more children are alive who would otherwise have died before they were five
- 4.4 million more women are alive who would otherwise have died during pregnancy or childbirth
- 1.3bn tonnes of food per year are saved from going to waste
- There are 470 million more workers with good jobs and livelihoods
- 1.2 billion more people are connected to electricity
- Global temperatures are on a path to stabilisation
- 220 million fewer people are suffering the crippling effects of natural disasters

Sources: *Global Development Goals (UNA-UK)*, *Report of the UN High-Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda*

FLAWED BUT INDISPENSABLE

For United Nations Day 2013, let's acknowledge the UN's achievements

The founding of the United Nations in 1945 offered a war-weary world hope for a new era of peace and progress.

It can be hard to believe in this promise today. Far too many people still die each year from violence, disasters and deprivation. Over a billion struggle to get by on less than £1 a day. Even more lack access to basic necessities. The world's richest one per cent, meanwhile, owns over 40 per cent of the world's wealth. In some countries, low birth rates and ageing populations have governments worried about pensions and elder care. In others, children are being born into terrible conditions.

Human rights violations persist in all corners of the globe. Humanitarian emergencies are set to increase while a robust response to climate change continues to elude us. The number of people uprooted by conflict or persecution is at its highest level in 18 years. And despite the tragic lessons of the past, the ongoing crisis in Syria is a grim reminder that we have still not managed to make a reality of the words, "never again".

But while we cannot lose sight of the UN's growing to-do list, we must also remember its achievements. In many ways, the world has become a better place since its inception. Today, most people live longer, healthier lives. Human development, measured in terms of life expectancy, education, health, income and living standards, increased by 18 per cent between 1990 and 2010. During the past decade, the average annual death toll from warfare was half of what it was in the 1990s, and a third what it was during the Cold War.

The UN has made a significant contribution to these advances, presiding over progress in international law; developing mechanisms for peacekeeping; building programmes for poverty alleviation; and facilitating the peaceful transition to independence of scores of former colonies, radically changing the makeup of today's world.

In recent years, the economic downturn, political deadlock over Syria and insular governments have led commentators to predict the UN's demise. Others say it has proved remarkably resilient, pointing to its increasing importance in a rapidly shifting, interdependent world.

The truth is somewhere in between. The UN will never fulfil the hopes of its most fervent advocates and its inevitable mistakes will continue to provide fodder for its detractors. But as a place for nations to convene, as a setter of important global norms, and as a provider of essential services, from emergency food relief to human rights monitors and peacekeepers, the UN will surely remain a significant actor as it approaches its 70th birthday.

There is certainly no shortage of challenges that require international co-operation. The United Nations, both flawed and indispensable, will continue to be called upon.

**The UN Deputy High Commissioner for
Human Rights visiting a newly built police
station in Mambassa, in Ituri district,
eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo,
in August 2013** © UN Photo/Sylvain
Liechti. Graphic above © United Nations
Department of Public Information - 2013



The United Nations

-  Provides food to 90 million people in 75 countries
-  Vaccinates 58 per cent of the world's children, saving 2.5 million lives a year
-  Assists over 34 million refugees and people fleeing war, famine or persecution
-  Combats climate change; works with 140 nations to prevent harmful mercury emissions
-  Keeps peace with 120,000 peacekeepers in 16 operations on 4 continents
-  Fights poverty, helping 370 million rural poor achieve better lives in the last 30 years
-  Protects and promotes human rights on site and through some 80 treaties/declarations
-  Mobilizes US\$12.5 billion in humanitarian aid to help people affected by emergencies
-  Uses diplomacy to prevent conflict; assists some 50 countries a year with elections
-  Promotes maternal health, saving the lives of 30 million women a year

Support the UN. Join UNA-UK.
www.una.org.uk

Moving to nuclear zero

The UK's ability to influence global nuclear disarmament and reduce nuclear dangers must be the most important measure of our actions in deciding on Trident renewal



Paul Ingram is Executive Director of the British American Security Information Council (BASIC)

Governments around the world talk of the desirability of a nuclear weapons-free world, the only genuinely sustainable way of avoiding full-scale nuclear anarchy and the inevitable use of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, there are people who believe that nuclear weapons have prevented war between larger states and that multilateral nuclear disarmament is misguided, but they are a small minority. Aren't they?

So why do we find global nuclear disarmament so difficult? It's not just because states are waiting for others to go first. There are issues of trust (and mistrust) between governments, such as verifying the various steps needed for disarmament, and attachment to the perceived international status that nuclear weapon possession can bring. There are protracted regional disputes, conflicts over resources and identities, and the very real fear that states will abuse their military superiority in other areas. You could say it's a mess, crying out for solutions.

The UK – which must decide by 2016 whether to replace its Trident system if it is to be done without any gaps in patrols – needs to consider whether it really does need to replace its nuclear weapons

However, one characteristic of complex issues is that competing interests, objectives and viewpoints can generate more than enough so-called solutions. Adding more only complicates the situation further. The challenge is rather in finding improvements that work on common interests and attract sufficient support between conflicting groups. Quick fixes, or simple solutions, particularly those originating from the outside, tend only to deepen disagreements.

When approaching complexity, the temptation is to discover simplicity by ignoring the bigger picture, cutting out what you believe to be extraneous problems. But that doesn't work. Instead, it pays to bring people together that represent a variety of perspectives in controlled, extended processes that enable participants to

express their concerns and proposals, and explore ways through the morass, building trust along the way.

We at BASIC have attempted this approach to address the deeply entrenched positions over the future of the UK's nuclear arsenal. In 2011, we set up the Trident Commission. We saw this as an opportunity to bring together representatives of the British establishment to consider how the UK could best contribute to global nuclear disarmament at this point while prioritising its national security, in the context of Trident renewal.

Our aim is to foster confidence in the possibility that the UK can find a balance that ensures there is faith in the efficient maintenance of its national security capabilities while encouraging more effectively the conditions for multilateral disarmament. Arguments that prioritise global security over British capabilities or status may appeal to certain internationalists but will not achieve sufficient support among domestic constituencies. They are also unlikely to be as convincing to other states as we would perhaps like to think, unless rooted in international processes.

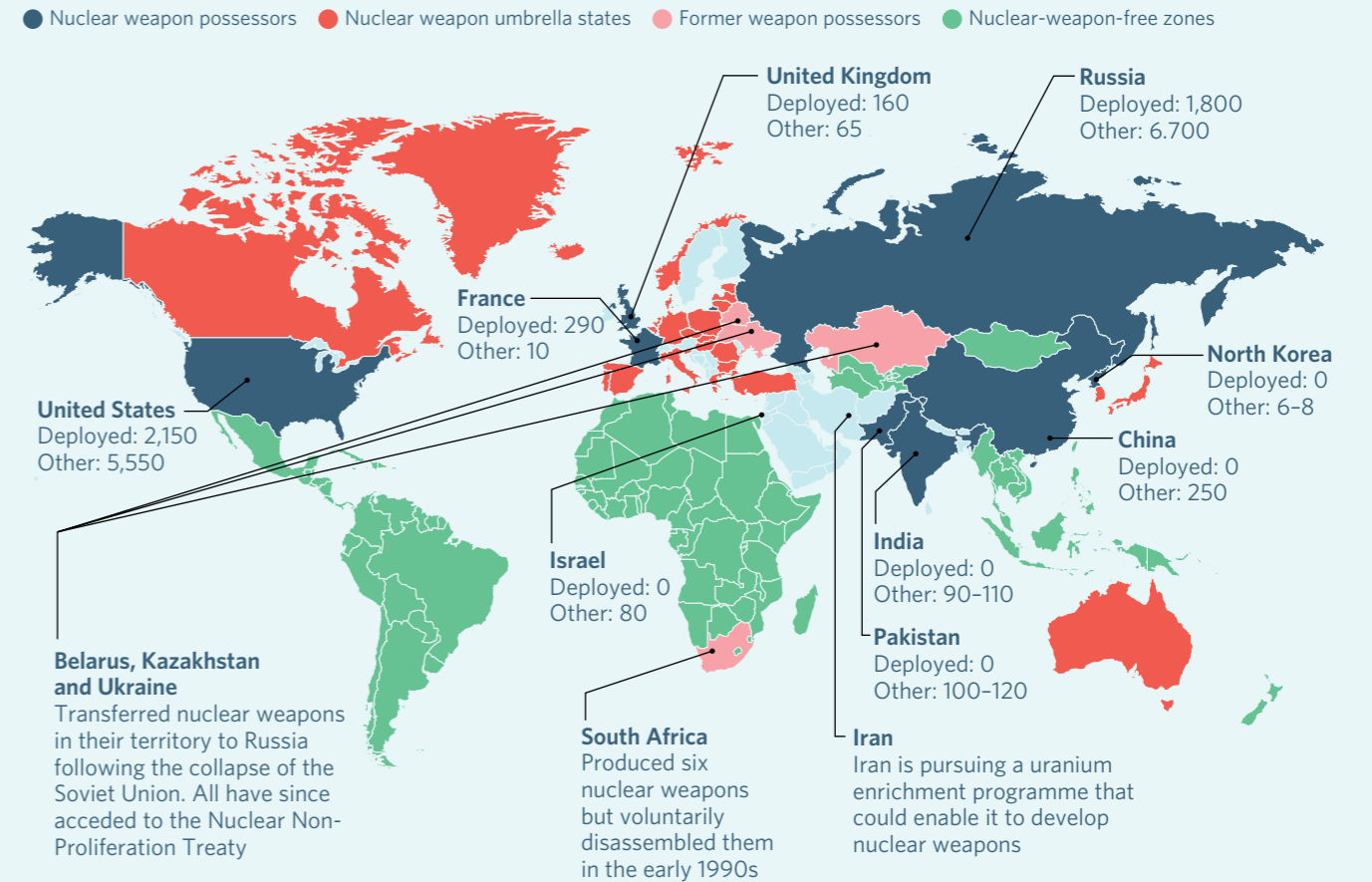
But what does this actually mean for the domestic debate? What are the conditions for global disarmament and how can the UK best bring these about? We need to take this beyond rhetoric and establish an informed dialogue on what it means to pursue steps down the nuclear ladder.

In 2008, former UK Defence Secretary and current Trident Commission co-chair Des Browne initiated the so-called P5 process,¹ which brings together the recognised nuclear-weapon states: China, France, Russia, the UK and US. Progress has been slow. Up to now, meetings have concentrated on foundation stones such as verification or a shared glossary of terms. But there are signs that confidence between the five states is growing.

The UK could use this process to open up focused discussion on the different dimensions of multilateral disarmament, such as:

- Tighter shared declaratory policies, such as committing to no first use
- Bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force (for which ratification by China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the US is needed) >>

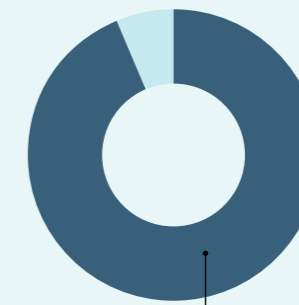
Global nuclear map



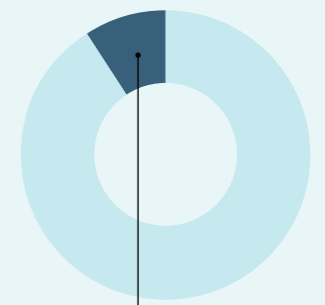
Numbers given for deployed nuclear warheads and stockpiled/other warheads, as of 2013. Deployed warhead figures are estimates from SIPRI and FAS, but caution is needed on definitions and when comparing numbers between countries.

The majority of the world's population lives in nuclear-weapon states or in states they have guaranteed to defend (nuclear umbrella states).

Nuclear-weapons-free zones have been established in Africa, central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Mongolia, Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. International treaties also stipulate that the Antarctic, the moon, outer space and seabed should be free of nuclear weapons.

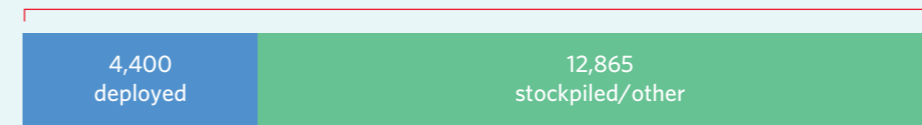


The US and Russia own **93.8%** of the world's nuclear warheads



The nine states with nuclear weapons spent around **\$100bn** on their programmes in 2011, amounting to roughly **9%** of their total military spending

17,270 warheads worldwide



Sources: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2013, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and Federation of American Scientists

- >> • Adopting the proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, which seeks to prohibit the further production of materials for nuclear weapons, such as highly enriched uranium and plutonium
- Moving to stability at lower numbers, how transparency measures and numerical limits could be negotiated, and what later stages would look like (such as virtual or threshold arsenals)
- How to universalise the process by bringing in India, Pakistan and Israel without undermining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The process could also be used to consider a moratorium on nuclear modernisation programmes as a first step towards a genuine multilateral nuclear disarmament process, an idea promoted by former UNA-UK Vice-President Malcolm Savidge.

The UK – which must decide by 2016 whether to replace its Trident system if it is to be done without any gaps in patrols – needs to consider whether it really does need to replace its nuclear weapons. Because of the complexity of the decision, traditional arguments for and against replacement will not determine outcomes.

Those that remain attached to the current renewal plans need to answer better the question of how these plans can be achieved in a manner that retains sufficient flexibility

for the UK to drive the international disarmament agenda. Those in favour of disarming unilaterally no matter what must recognise that placing the discussion firmly in the multilateral camp draws the sting from the debate and can open up more positive thinking. In providing leadership amongst among the nuclear-weapon states, how can we show that the UK is serious about those multilateral steps, and have things to offer at the disarmament table? And when will we be willing to give up the continuous patrolling of nuclear weapons if not now?

Among the recognised nuclear-weapon states, the UK, which has the smallest nuclear arsenal of the five, has established itself as being at the vanguard of disarmament – a position that has cross-party support. But maintaining this position requires continual movement on our part. Being complacent will not bring about the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. Asking the critical questions with a fresh perspective is perhaps where UNA members could have most impact in the coming debate. ●

1. Used as shorthand for the meetings, the name is misleading as it implies that these countries' permanent membership of the Security Council is linked to their possession of nuclear weapons. In fact, when the Council was established just one of them – the US – had tested a nuclear weapon.

Trident

The UK's sea-based nuclear weapons system has three parts: submarines, missiles and warheads. Only one submarine is on patrol at any one time and it is on several days' notice to fire.

The submarines have a lifespan of around 30 years due to end in 2028. If the system is to be replaced without gaps in patrols, a decision on its future must be taken by 2016.

The UK has four Trident submarines

At any one time there is:

- 1 armed and at sea
- 1 undergoing maintenance
- 2 in port or on training manoeuvres

Each submarine can hold:

135 crew | 8 missiles | up to 40 warheads

Range of UK's Trident missiles



Size of submarine



Sources: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2013, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and Federation of American Scientists

Feature

An inspector recalls

As the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons begins its work in Syria, Alexa van Sickle speaks to former UN weapons inspector Rolf Ekéus about his experiences in Iraq



Alexa van Sickle is an assistant editor at the International Institute for Strategic Studies

From 1991 to 1997, Rolf Ekéus was Executive Chairman of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), the body created following the First Gulf War to ensure that Iraq complied with the Security Council's requirement that the country give up its weapons of mass destruction.

UNSCOM faced difficulties from the start. The Iraqi government made an initial declaration under the weapons inspection regime imposed by the Security Council's ceasefire resolution, but this was incomplete and obscured the extent of the country's production capabilities. The weapons inspectors, who were repeatedly denied access to certain sites, were later told that some weapons had been destroyed "in secret", causing a major verification issue.

"In spite of various confrontations between UNSCOM and Iraq, the disarmament work [moved] forward in a steady pace," says Ekéus. Indeed, UNSCOM managed to destroy key chemical weapon facilities and force the Iraqi regime to admit to the existence of its biological programmes. "[These] programmes had been kept secret by Iraq for years, but it was a brilliant, almost emotional effort by UNSCOM's group of senior scientists that broke the net of secrets around Iraq's biological weapons," the Swedish career diplomat adds. On the nuclear front, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported in 1997 that there were no indications that Iraq retained any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material in amounts of any practical significance.

By 1998, Ekéus says, "we were certain that Iraq's prohibited weapons capabilities had been eliminated". At that point, some Security Council members wanted to declare Iraq officially disarmed but the US and UK resisted. Moreover, both UNSCOM and the IAEA

considered their work to be unfinished, citing a lack of full disclosure by Iraq on areas such as germ warfare and chemical weapons production equipment, as well as a lack of archival material.

"The absence of UNSCOM and the IAEA made it necessary for governments to rely upon respective intelligence services for information about activities in Iraq," says Ekéus. "Governments' intelligence was meagre and ... based more on assessments and guesswork about Saddam Hussein's intentions than on their own shaky weapons intelligence. I have now had the opportunity to read the translation into English of the Saddam Tapes – like Nixon he taped his conversations with his top staff – and it is clear that no plans for the renewing of a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programme were under consideration."

Much of what UNSCOM had found out in the early 1990s was confirmed in 1995 by the Iraqi defector Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel, who had been responsible for Saddam's weapons programmes. His testimony was invoked by then-US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and later by the Bush Administration, although he himself believed Iraq's WMD had been destroyed. Kamel was killed when he returned to Iraq in 1996.

Ekéus feels that the US government knew in 1997 that his team was probably going to report to the Security Council that the weapons part of the ceasefire resolution had been implemented, and that subsequently the oil embargo and other sanctions on Iraq could be eased. "This did not at all suit [then-President] Clinton, as there had been growing momentum among the 'necons' – Republicans and some Democrats – that it was time for regime change," he says.

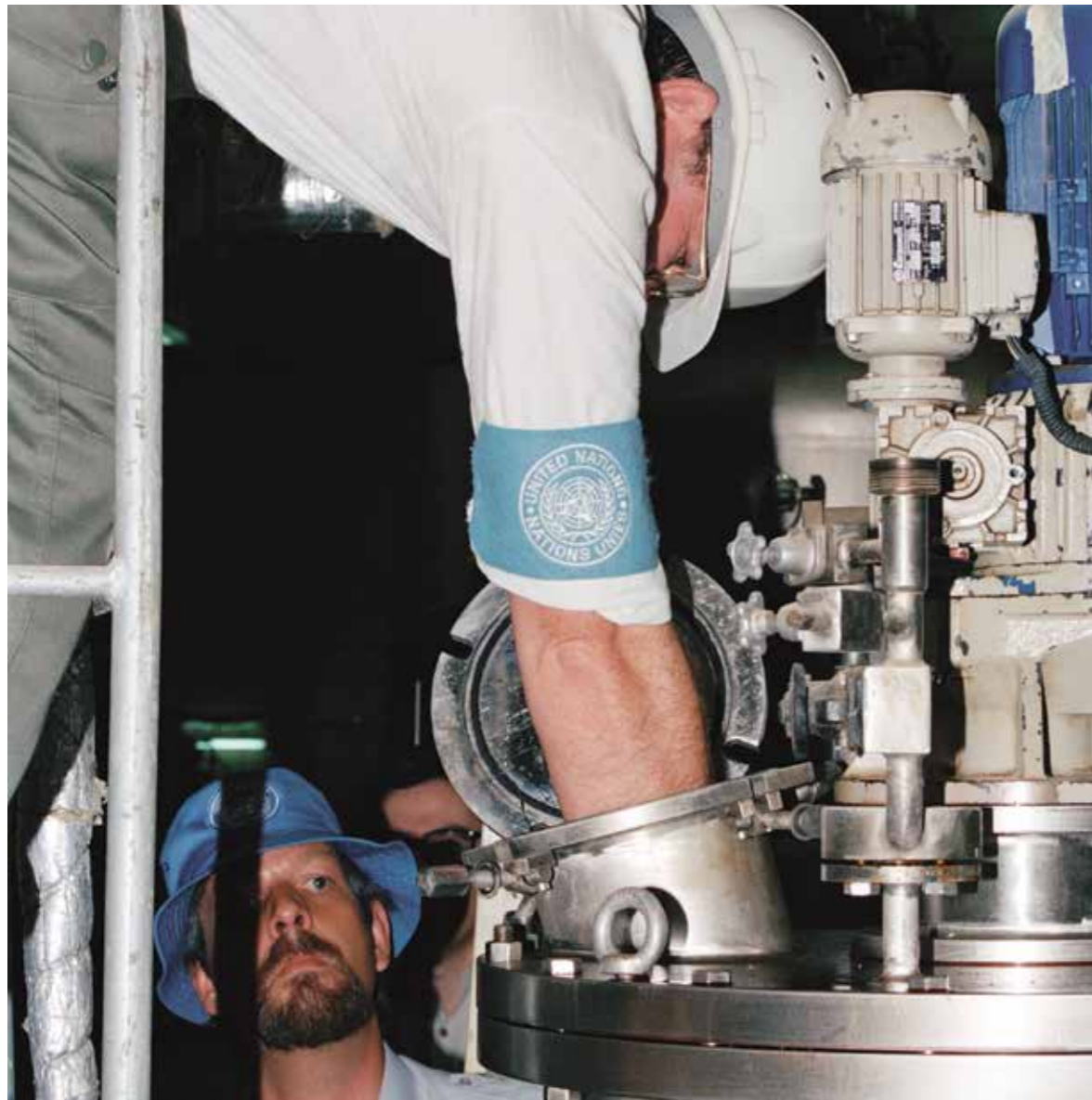
In spring 1997, Albright gave the commencement speech at Georgetown University during which she said that the sanctions would not be lifted.

"This was in my judgement a clear violation of the ceasefire resolution. When the prospects for lifting the sanctions were gone, the Iraqi side could see no major interest in co-operating with the inspectors. [Then-Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq] Aziz warned me that Saddam Hussein, after Albright's statement, could have little interest in cooperating with UNSCOM as the US insisted on his removal no matter what."

In July 1997, Richard Butler succeeded Ekéus. UNSCOM's work continued throughout 1997 and 1998 but with increasing disruption. The Iraqi regime >>



Rolf Ekéus addresses the Foreign Policy Association in Uppsala, Sweden © Niklas Barke



Biological weapons
inspectors take samples
from fermenters at a single
cell protein facility at Al
Hakam, Iraq, in 1991
© UN Photo/H Arvidsson

>> repeatedly restricted access to sites and refused the inspectors permission to enter.

With mounting threats from Iraq to the inspectors and US-British air strikes on the horizon, UNSCOM withdrew in December 1998, after which four days of bombing took place. When the strikes ended, Iraq again refused to accept UNSCOM. The Security Council was not able to reach agreement on next steps until December 1999, when it created a new inspection commission. In the meantime, UNSCOM was dissolved, which Ekéus has previously described as a 'blunder'.

It was not until November 2002 that inspections were resumed under Hans Blix and the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Two months earlier, then-President Bush had described the regime as "a grave and gathering danger" in a speech to the UN General Assembly. However, in March 2003, Blix reported that Iraq had accelerated its co-operation, and that his inspectors needed more time to verify its compliance.

Around that time, Ekéus was involved with a last-ditch effort to avoid the war. He thought the probability of renewed production was small, but could not be excluded. "That was why I, together with Jessica Mathews, Director of the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, and Charles Boyd, just-retired four-star general from the Pentagon, instead of an invasion proposed what we

called 'intrusive inspections' with military back-up, as a superior alternative to invasion."

General Boyd acknowledged in September 2002 that this was a complex and difficult proposition – one that "only becomes attractive when you compare it with the complexity of assembling an invasion force for the purposes of a regime change in a country that is in possession of weapons of mass destruction".

The plan was endorsed by then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and supported by France, Norway and Germany. "General Boyd and I were invited to the White House where we briefed the Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley and his team about the plan, and became subject to a sharp cross-examination," Ekéus recalls.

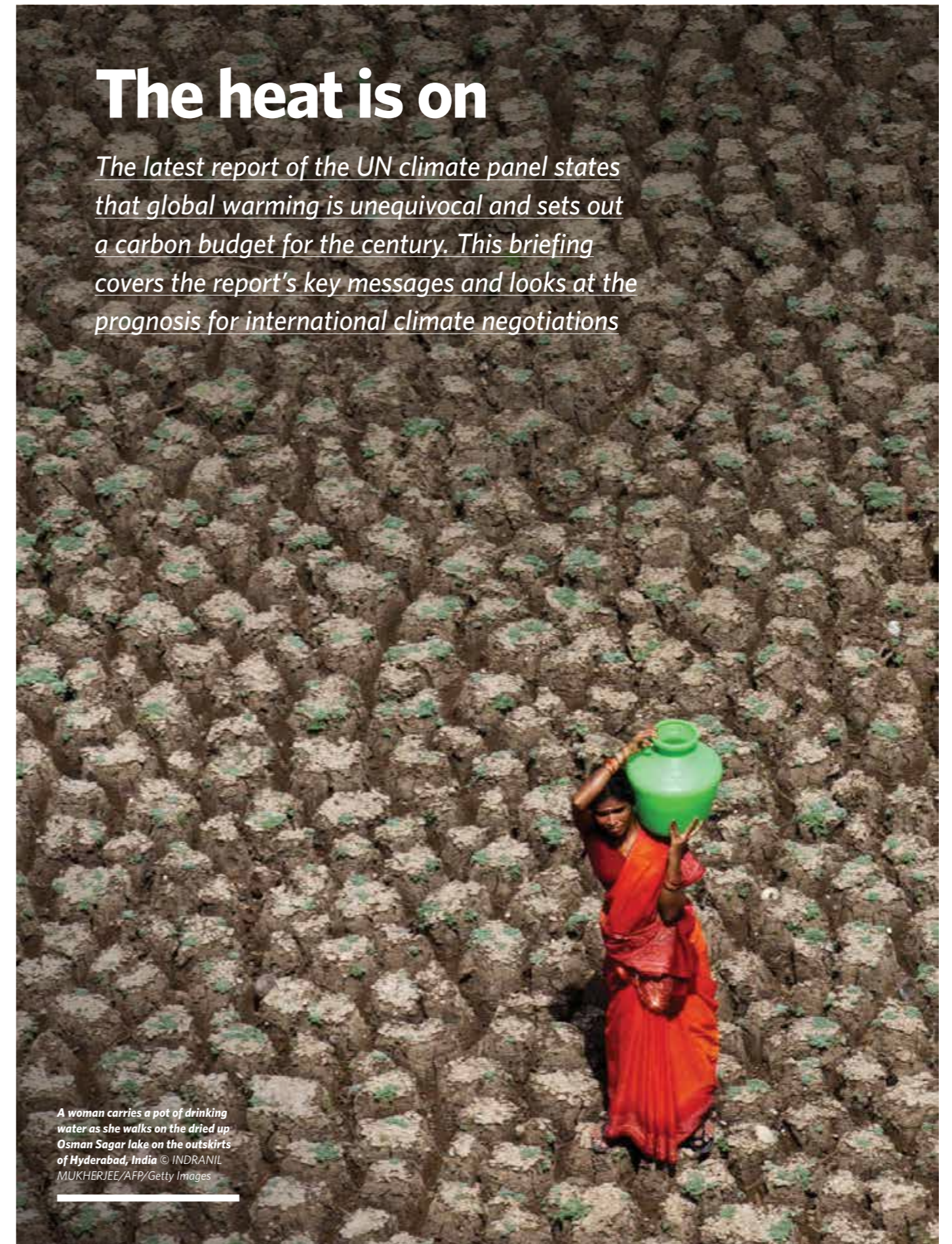
Just over a week later, the US and its allies launched their invasion of Iraq. The impacts of this decision are still unfolding, a decade on, and influencing policies in and towards the region.

What has been forgotten, however, are the achievements of UNSCOM and the IAEA in eliminating virtually all of Iraq's residual nuclear, biological and chemical programmes. "To me personally," Ekéus says, "the lack of appreciation of the success for the UN with the complete disarmament of Iraq in accordance with the ceasefire resolution is the greatest disappointment." ●

Briefing

The heat is on

The latest report of the UN climate panel states that global warming is unequivocal and sets out a carbon budget for the century. This briefing covers the report's key messages and looks at the prognosis for international climate negotiations



A woman carries a pot of drinking water as she walks on the dried up Osman Sagar lake on the outskirts of Hyderabad, India © INDRANIL MUKHERJEE/AFP/Getty Images

The heat is on. We must act.” With these words, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon introduced the first part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report, released on 27 September.

Set up in 1988 by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization, the Panel provides policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation. The reports are intended to inform government action and international discussions under the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) but they do not spell out policy recommendations. They are put together by hundreds of leading scientists and reviewed by thousands of their peers.

IPCC report highlights

- Global warming is indisputable and it is “extremely likely” that human activities have been the dominant cause since the 1950s.
- Despite the so-called hiatus in warming since 1998, the period 1983–2012 is likely the warmest for 1,400 years.
- Warming is likely to exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels, even if we begin to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- To avoid moving beyond this threshold, global carbon emissions should not exceed 800–880 gigatonnes this century. Around 530 gigatonnes had already been emitted by 2011.
- To achieve this target, emissions will need to peak by 2020 and then fall. By 2090, there should be more carbon taken out of the atmosphere than put in.
- Sea levels are expected to rise by another 26–82cm by the end of the century.

The first part of the Fifth Assessment covers the physical science basis. The IPCC’s last such report, produced in 2007, stated that most of the observed temperature increase in recent decades is “very likely” anthropogenic.

This year’s report upgrades that assessment to “extremely likely”, representing a move from over 90 per cent likelihood, to more than 95 per cent, in IPCC parlance. It also sets out a ‘carbon budget’ for this century, which puts a figure on the amount of CO₂ that can be emitted if global temperature rises are to stay below the 2°C threshold agreed by governments at successive UNFCCC meetings. It estimates that we had already used around 60 per cent of the budget in the first decade of this century.

The Kyoto Protocol

At the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, governments adopted the UNFCCC as a mechanism through which to consider action to limit climate change. Three years later, they began negotiations to agree more stringent greenhouse-gas reduction measures and in 1997 the Kyoto Protocol was created (although it did not enter into force for another eight years).

At its outset, the Protocol bound 37 rich countries to emission cuts amounting to some 4.2 per cent on 1990 levels. Developing states did not take on reduction targets. Pointing to developed countries’ historical

responsibility for CO₂ build-up, and fearful that limits would impede their development, they pushed for the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities”. This holds that states’ differing contributions to environmental degradation, as well as their particular circumstances, must be taken into account when determining what action is expected of them.

Symbolically, Kyoto is significant as the first binding international emissions agreement. But it has had little effect in global terms. While the (mostly European) states bound by its targets have exceeded them, much of their success can be attributed to the collapse of polluting industries, the outsourcing of emissions to developing countries where products are manufactured and, to a lesser extent, the economic slowdown.

Meanwhile emissions from emerging economies have risen rapidly, with China overtaking the US to become the world’s largest emitter in 2006–2007. India is now a very distant third. The US itself never ratified the Protocol and Canada withdrew at the end of the first Kyoto commitment period (2008–2012). Overall, global emissions are more than 46 per cent up on 1990 levels.

What next?

Work on a successor agreement to Kyoto began at the 2007 UNFCCC meeting but disagreements resurfaced immediately. In 2009, the UN took a gamble by setting up that year’s meeting in Copenhagen as the now or never moment for a new treaty. The conference ended in disarray, with a weak outcome document that was merely “noted” by the parties.

Since then, there has been some progress. The 2010 UNFCCC meeting formally adopted the contents of the Copenhagen meeting in the Cancun Agreements, under which more than 90 countries have now submitted mitigation pledges. For the first time, this includes all major economies. The US has pledged to cut emissions by 17 per cent on 2005 levels by 2020, India by 20–25 per cent and China by 40–45 per cent. But UNEP projects that even if all pledges are fulfilled, they will deliver less than half the greenhouse gas reduction needed.

Subsequent UNFCCC meetings have focused mainly on what should be done at future conferences. States decided that their 2015 conference should adopt “a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force” that is applicable to all parties from 2020. They have left two major sticking points unaddressed: to what degree the agreement will be binding, and to what extent developed and developing countries’ responsibilities will differ.

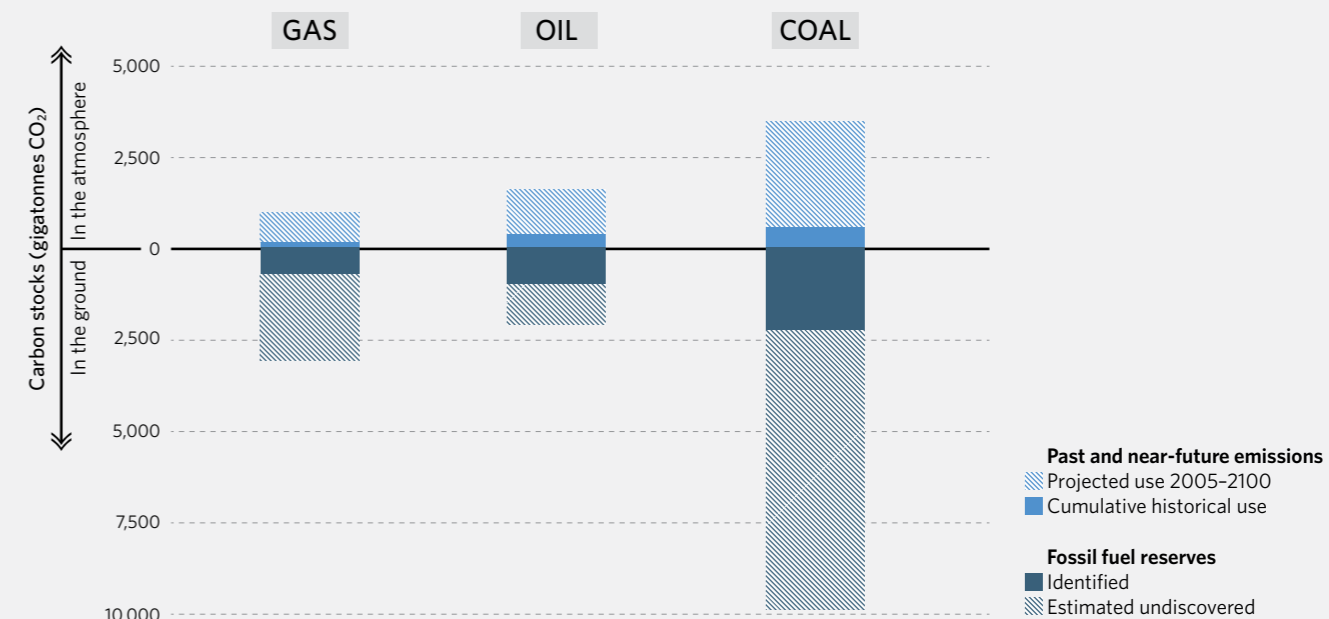
In the interim, there is to be a second period of commitments under Kyoto, from 2013 to 2020. As Japan, New Zealand and Russia have not agreed to another round of obligations, this extension now covers countries representing just 15 per cent or so of global emissions.

Last tango in Paris

The 2015 meeting in Paris looks set to be another make-or-break moment. Ban Ki-moon has announced that he will convene world leaders in 2014 to mobilise political will and, it is hoped, ease the path to agreement. Ban, who has made climate change a priority during both his terms as UN Secretary-General, is reportedly keen for high-level participation in the process to occur early on, so that the failures of Copenhagen can be avoided.

Can Paris deliver? Negotiators and experts feel that there is little appetite for a Kyoto-style treaty among the

What lies beneath



Sources: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; Nature volume 491, issue 7426

major players, such as the US, China and India, which would prefer to see a system of national initiatives. In this emerging model, countries would set their own targets to be tracked under an international framework.

China has gone from having virtually no green infrastructure in 2008 to a renewable energy capacity of 133 gigawatts – enough to power 53m homes

Over the last few years, spurred on in part through the UNFCCC process, there has been a marked increase in domestic action on climate change and environmental degradation. In 2012, Globe International, an organisation of parliamentarians from more than 70 countries, found that 32 of the 33 economies it surveyed, representing over 80 per cent of global emissions, had introduced or are moving towards significant climate-related regulation and legislation. China has gone from having virtually no green infrastructure in 2008 to a renewable energy capacity of 133 gigawatts – enough to power 53m homes.

There is a danger that this approach could, in effect, universalise the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The US has already proposed that states be able to take into account any “factors they consider relevant” when determining their targets. Many developing countries believe that even under a non-binding regime, their measures should be geared more towards adaptation than emission reductions. The EU, meanwhile, is keen to inject more rigour into the agreement. It would like to see national targets assessed collectively against the backdrop of the 2°C warming limit, and a reviewing process that pushes them to become progressively more ambitious.

“Climate-gate” – just hot air

IPCC reports are based on thousands of peer-reviewed papers. And yet, in recent years, headlines questioning their findings have outnumbered practical responses:

- The IPCC’s 2007 report included a handful of much-publicised errors, such as the claim that the Himalayan glaciers could melt away by 2035. The Panel has since said this is too short a timeframe and that “the clear and well-established standards of evidence, required by the IPCC procedures, were not applied properly”. However, it also stressed that the credibility of the overall report cannot be dismissed as a result.
- In 2009 leaked messages between scientists at the University of East Anglia, whose work was linked to the IPCC, were interpreted as attempts to manipulate or hide data. But at least three investigations to date have found no evidence to support this conclusion.
- The so-called ‘climate pause’ – no apparent warming since 1998 – is increasingly touted as evidence contrary to global warming. In its current report, the Panel tackles this argument head-on, saying that 15 years is not a significant period in climate modelling and pointing to the El Niño phenomenon, anomalously warm seas that can cause climatic changes, that occurred that year.

Many scientists believe that these stories, and accusations of alarmism, have led the IPCC to be too conservative, on sea-level projections for instance. Several studies also suggest that keeping emissions to the two-degree temperature limit would produce unacceptable results in other areas, such as ocean acidification and plant productivity.

Such an agreement is a long way off from the robust framework that UNA-UK would like to see. It could, however, be a pragmatic milestone in international action. If it is to work, it will require a high degree of creativity and compromise to ensure that this patchwork of domestic actions becomes a coherent, transparent and effective multilateral framework. To date, such ambition has been sorely lacking. ●



Stanley Johnson on the green agenda

The conservationist and writer tells UNA-UK's Executive Director about the achievements of the UN Environment Programme, his doubts about 'green growth', and why forests should be our priority

A former Member of the European Parliament, Stanley Johnson has worked with various UN bodies on environmental issues, as well as for the World Bank and European Commission. Since then, he has been a trustee of the Earthwatch Institute, Plantlife International and the Jane Goodall Institute. In 1984 he was awarded the Greenpeace Prize for Outstanding Services to the Environment. He is the author of nine novels and over a dozen books on environmental subjects, including Where the Wild Things Were. Johnson's latest publication is a history of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Stanley Johnson attends the unveiling of the statue of 'Boris The Polar Bear' in London to launch a campaign to save the species on 14 January 2013. Two months later, a proposal to ban cross-border trade in the bears was defeated at the triennial meeting of parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species © Getty Images

How did the book come about? I was invited by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to write this history to mark its 40th anniversary. My pattern in life is always to say yes to proposals and I was particularly ready to do so on this occasion because I've been involved with UNEP one way or the other right from the start. Indeed, I was a consultant to Maurice Strong, the Programme's first director, in the run-up to the first-ever UN conference on the human environment in 1972. So this was a way for me to revisit what I have witnessed over the past four decades.

One of the most important milestones was undoubtedly what UNEP did on ozone depletion in the 1970s and 1980s. It seized the scientific evidence and, under the leadership of Mostafa Tolba, ran with it, scoring a string of remarkable successes with the Vienna Convention on protecting the ozone layer, the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete it, and funding to ensure they got implemented. Now, experts predict that the ozone hole could return to its normal state by 2050.

Another milestone – and potential success – was UNEP's role in setting up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I say potential success because, although it was a totally brilliant kick off to UN action on the climate problem in 1988, the follow-up to the Panel's work has been lacking and here we are, 25 years later, still trying to get an effective regime in place.

It was a shame that the lead role on the creation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was taken away from UNEP and given to a special intergovernmental committee. Some hard-hitting stuff on emissions or consumption, with economic consequences, might have come out of the Convention otherwise. Cynics would say that governments were afraid that the UN might be successful and that Tolba would be up there on his platform bullying them into

making an agreement they didn't necessarily want to have. In the event, we got something that was good at setting out the objective but not the action needed.

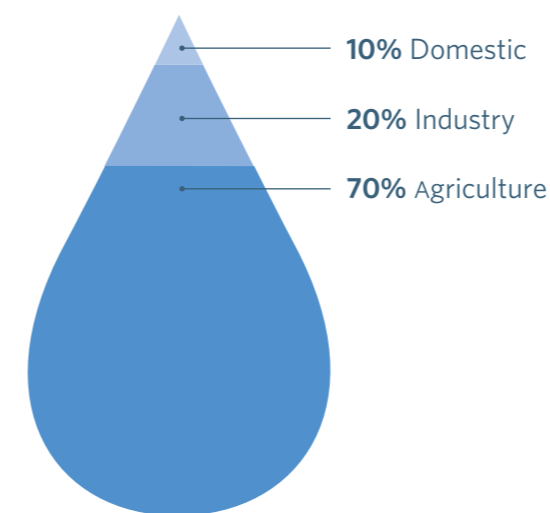
In some ways, we haven't moved forward much since then. We've still got leaders saying we must urgently address climate change. We've still got individuals who doubt the science. We've still got divisions between developed and developing countries. And we have utterly failed to get to grips with the forest issue. In 1990, I went to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to help draft a forests convention, intended for discussion at the 1992 Earth Summit, alongside the biodiversity, climate and desertification texts. It withered under intense opposition. This should be a top priority for us now.

I confess I'm also a little wary of the current push for green growth. In many ways, it's repackaging the same ideas of the sustainable development movement – this belief that we can continue to grow and consume ad nauseam if only we do it right. I can understand why this approach is being taken but I don't buy it. I would much prefer the UN to come out and say that we need to change our lifestyles, clamp back on economic growth and take action to stabilise our consumption and population.

Of course, this would not be acceptable to most states. Every politician today will make the case for growth, growth and more growth. Sure, if every country, every corporation and every individual took all the actions set out by UNEP and others, it is possible that we might be able to reverse the damage, or the rate of damage, of climate change. But what about biodiversity? What about our ecosystems?

Overall, I'm afraid I think our chances of advancing the agenda in the next few years are pretty iffy. States have given themselves a deadline of 2015 to decide on something that will begin to bite in 2020. Even getting to that stage won't be easy. It's been hard enough trying >>

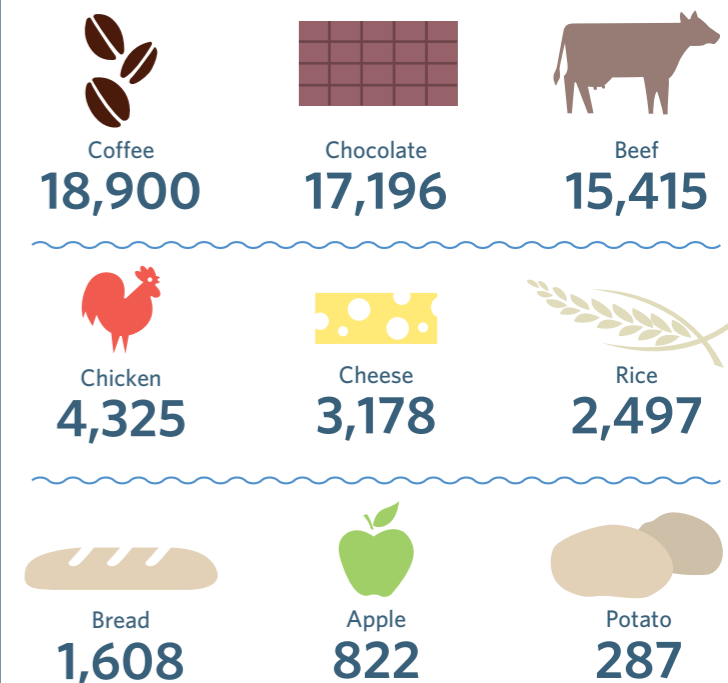
Smart choices on food can have a huge impact on the environment



Every day, one person drinks 2-4 litres of water and eats 2,000-5,000 litres of water embedded in food production



What our food costs in water (litres per kilo)



Sources: Global Food: waste not, want not, Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013, and UN-Water.org

A black-mantled tamarin in the Yasuni National Park, Ecuador, one of the most biodiverse locations in the world. It is home to at least 41 vulnerable or endangered species, as well as two uncontacted tribes. It also has 20 per cent of the country's oil reserves. Six years ago, President Rafael Correa said that Ecuador would leave the oil untouched in return for \$3.6bn (half the oil's estimated value at the time) to be placed in a UN-administered trust. He withdrew the proposal this summer, as just 0.37 per cent of the target had been reached.

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>> to claw back ground after the disastrous UNFCCC meeting in 2009.

If we are going to see movement, Brazil, China, India – the large emerging economies – will need to accept binding emissions curbs. China seems to have radically changed its position and has adopted ambitious national targets, but nothing at the global level yet. The same goes for the US, although its success in reducing emissions over the past five years owes more, perhaps, to the economic slowdown and the shale gas boon, than to progressive policies.

Do I think a new World Environment Organisation would make a difference? In my view, we already have one, especially now that UNEP's membership has been made universal. Think of the time that would have been spent drafting from scratch a new treaty, building support, trying to get the big countries on board. And there's no guarantee that we would have got something better. Yes, it sounds great to say we've created this new body that will change things – that's what we said in Stockholm when UNEP was created – but how about we put our energy into what we do have.

The UK has a real role to play in this, as a key player within UNEP and through our membership of the EU. And although my short-term prognosis isn't overly optimistic, I do think that we as individuals must continue to take action. In particular, we must keep pegging away at our parliamentarians, including those in Strasbourg.

The EU is such a dominant player in international environmental politics. When it gets its act together, there are brilliant outcomes, like the Habitats Directive which protects fauna and flora. When it fails, the

consequences can be serious. Earlier this year, a proposal to ban cross-border trade in polar bears was defeated at meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, in part because the EU had been unable to agree a common position and therefore abstained.

We can also change our own lifestyles, although I'm afraid I can't claim to be leading by example, other than through bicycling! I've had far too many children, way above my replacement rate, even if you divide them by the number of wives.

Smart choices on food, for instance, can have a huge impact. You probably eat less meat if you go down the organic route, and when you do, it will have been produced in a far more sustainable way. There is a triple pay-off in terms of health, environment and animal welfare.


And I think we must be ready to fight against those things that are really bad, especially when they're dressed up as solutions, like the UK's plans to convert power plants to wood burners (in my opinion), or the mass clearing of forests in order to produce biodiesel from palm oil. We can do it. Look at the impact that the UN Economic Commission for Europe had on car exhaust emissions, or the work of the International Maritime Organization on ocean pollution.

So many of these international agreements have a profound impact on our lives. And although we might not – yet – have made the progress we need, I think that as a result of these agreements we have managed to stop things getting as bad as fast as they would have done. That surely is an achievement. ●



Award-winning conservationist and writer Stanley Johnson traces the history and milestones of the UN Environment Programme, the world's leading intergovernmental organisation on environmental issues.

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