

All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations



UNA-UK

c/o UN Association of the UK
3 Whitehall Court
London SW1A 2EL

AGM 2012 - MINUTES

Thursday 5 July 2012, 11am

Present (members)

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Chair)
Baroness Coussins (Vice-Chair)
Lord Judd

Present (non-members)

Ben Donaldson (UN APPG Coordinator, c/o UNA-UK)
Sophia Ostler (Inter-Parliamentary Union - UK)

Apologies

Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead (Vice-Chair)
Mark Lancaster MP (Vice-Chair)
Baroness Whitaker

1. Welcome from the Group's current Chair, Lord Hannay

Lord Hannay welcomed Members to the meeting.

2. Circulation of the Group's 2011 AGM minutes and review of the Group's activity for the year

The 2011 minutes and activity report (attached) were circulated.

Lord Hannay noted the success of efforts to co-brand meetings with other APPGs where the topic of the meeting is mutually relevant. It was noted that this strategy yields much better turnouts of Parliamentarians at meetings thus making the most out of the high-level speakers that the UN APPG is fortunate enough to get.

Lord Hannay particularly mentioned the success of meetings with Sir Mark Lyall Grant on the Arab Spring, and with Ambassador Jaakko Laajava on a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, and remarked that these meetings provided excellent opportunities for Parliamentarians to come and get briefed on these issues.

Lord Judd remarked how impressed has been by the progress the UN APPG has made in the last year.

3. Election of officers

The following officers were elected:

Chair	Lord Hannay (Crossbench)
Vice-Chairs	Baroness Coussins (Crossbench) Baroness Kinnock (Lab) Mark Lancaster MP (Con)

Mark Lancaster MP has agreed to act as the Group's registered contact.

4. Ideas for the Group's 2012-13 programme of events

Lord Hannay reminded the Group that all members of the APPG are encouraged to submit their suggestions for the Group's 2012-13 programme of events and can do so any time by emailing Ben Donaldson (donaldson@una.org.uk), who is the Group's coordinator.

Baroness Coussins suggested the following topics for consideration in the 2012/13 programme of events:

- The role of women in post-conflict situations, with a focus on SCR1325
- Balancing the dual principles of business and human rights
- An examination of the reason for a lack of English interpreters at UN meetings resulting in alarming delays on important UN business. This event could be co-branded with the APPG on Foreign Languages.

Other ideas that were discussed included:

- An October meeting on the Trident Commission's work
- A meeting with Moreno Ocampo, the first Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC)
- Valerie Amos could potentially address the Group next year when she comes to the UK to receive her honorary degree from the University of Birmingham
- Future of the MDGs meeting with Alan Duncan MP

Lord Judd made the point that, where possible, meetings should focus on major current affair events that are in the public eye as such events are likely to get a good audience. He went on to suggest that the Group can help address the misconception that the UN is all too often criticised by politicians for having failed in its duties, when in fact, the UN gets used as a receptacle for issues that have failed in all other forums, and that the blame lies with Member States, not with the UN.

Lord Judd also noted that it is important that the Group engages new Members, particularly MPs.

5. AOB

All Members present lamented the patchy attendance at meetings. Lord Hannay remarked that this problem is not unique to the UN APPG and recalled that at a recent event organised by Lord Pattern, Chairman of the BBC Trust, of those who had RSVP'd, only two turned up.

Lord Hannay remarked that invites for almost all UN APPG meetings are widened out to all parliamentary researchers and staff, as well as to a selection of NGOs, with some meetings also widened out to UNA-UK members. He pointed out that attendance from these audiences is good, with the meetings providing an excellent resource for briefings on UN matters.

All Members present also noted the proliferation of APPGs and the alarming implications thereof. Lord Judd wondered if Members are even inclined to read the whip's notices, given the number of APPGs listed.

Ms Ostler (IPU-UK) suggested that there may be opportunities for the Group to collaborate with IPU-UK. She elaborated that IPU-UK's high-level visitors often have links with the UN and may be able to give foreign policy briefings to the Group as part of their visit. Ms Ostler also mentioned that IPU-UK may well be able to help get a good attendance from MPs at such events.

Thanks were expressed by all Members present to UNA-UK and the UN APPG Coordinator for their services as Secretariat of the Group, agreeing that their support over the last year has added significantly to the success of the Group.

Secretariat to the UN APPG

UNA-UK, a UK-based non-profit organisation, will continue to act as the secretariat to the UN APPG at no cost to the Group. The website for the Group is located at www.una.org.uk/un-appg.

Ben Donaldson, UNA-UK's Communications & Campaigns Officer, administers the UN APPG. He can be reached on donaldson@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3448.

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