

New World



News and comment on the UN & UNA-UK

Autumn 2012 // £3.00

Invisible issues

*Hidden people,
hidden problems*



WITH [Lord Loomba](#) on widows / [Etienne Krug](#) on road safety / [Amy Fehilly](#) on access to education in Iran / [M. Sohail](#) and [Sue Cavill](#) on sanitation / Arms Trade Treaty negotiations / the responsibility to protect / UN Day 2012



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

Together with our members and supporters, we:

- **Connect people in the UK and beyond with the work and values of the UN**
- **Influence decision-makers and opinion-shapers to promote UN goals**
- **Stimulate debate and action on ways to make the UN more effective**

A child washes himself in a slum in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. A billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to water, while 2.5 billion lack basic sanitation © UN Photo/Kibae Park



UNA-UK

To find out more and to become a member, visit www.una.org.uk

This issue's contributors



Sue Cavill
Water and sanitation specialist



Amy Fehilly
History and Persian student, School of African & Oriental Studies



Ruki Fernando
Sri Lankan human rights defender



Aldo Henriquez
International civil servant



Etienne Krug
Director, Violence and Injury Prevention, World Health Organisation



Raj Loomba CBE
Peer and founder of the Loomba Foundation



Barrie Oxtoby
Co-Chair, UNA Church Stretton



M Sohail
Professor of Sustainable Infrastructure, Loughborough University

UNA-UK

3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL / www.una.org.uk

The United Nations Association UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee (no. 1146016)

Chairman - Sir Jeremy Greenstock

Executive Director - Phil Mulligan

Deputy Director (Finance & Governance) - Carol Hodson

Deputy Director (Policy & Communications) - Natalie Samarasinghe

Membership & Business Development Manager

- Rich Nelmes

Peace & Security Programmes Manager

- James Kearney

Communications & Campaigns Officer - Ben Donaldson

Administration & Policy Support Officer - Hayley Richardson

Responsibility to Protect Officer - Alexandra Buskie

New World is published by UNA-UK

Editor - Natalie Samarasinghe, samarasinghe@una.org.uk

Sub-editor (print) - Cormac Bakewell, Soapbox

Sub-editor (online) - Hayley Richardson

Advertising - Please call Natalie Samarasinghe on 020 7766 3451

The deadline for submission of material for the next issue of *New World* is noon on 12 December 2012. All submissions should be typed and sent by email where possible. Photos should ideally be 300dpi resolution. The next issue will cover the period January to April 2013.

Subscription

Copies of *New World* are included in the membership fee for UNA-UK

Designed by Soapbox

www.soapbox.co.uk



This issue of *New World* is printed using vegetable-based inks on 100 per cent recycled chlorine- and acid-free paper. When you are finished with the magazine, please recycle it or, better yet, pass it on to a friend.

Contents



© UN Photo/Stuart Price

“When I first went to Mogadishu two years ago I was in a military truck ... Today, the streets are full of human beings” Augustine Mahiga, UN envoy for Somalia

- 4 Editorial**
Natalie Samarasinghe and Jeremy Greenstock
- 6 In brief**
- 8 Opinion**
The plight of widows
Raj Loomba on the campaign for an International Widows Day
- 9 Opinion**
Road safety
Etienne Krug on a WHO initiative that could save millions of lives
- 10 Opinion**
Iranian students
Amy Fehilly on access to education
- 11 Opinion**
Reinventing the toilet
M. Sohail and Sue Cavill on sanitation
- 12 Essay**
One every five days
Ruki Fernando on disappearances in Sri Lanka
- 14 Do something**
UN Day 2012
Phil Mulligan on supporting the UN
- 16 Feature**
Beyond intervention
Alexandra Buskie on the responsibility to protect
- 18 Correspondence and notices**
On Harold Stern, Rohingya, Syria, collecting and outreach grants
- 20 Feature**
Arms Trade Treaty negotiations
Ben Donaldson on possible routes ahead
- 22 The UN & the UK**
Report on UN Forum 2012 and UNA-UK policy activities
- 24 UNA-UK Members**
Uniting for peace and prosperity
Barrie Oxtoby on UNA Church Stretton's vision
- 25 UNA-UK Young Professionals**
Interview with UN staffer Aldo Henriquez
- 26 UNA Youth**
Freshers' fairs and youth campaign pack
- 27** - Become a UNA-UK supporter



Natalie Samarasinghe on invisible issues

This month, the Philippine government signed a peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to end – hopefully – a conflict that has spanned four decades and killed over 120,000 people. Like other events in the country, this historic deal has received only patchy media coverage. Last year, Google listed more news stories on the death of Apple CEO Steve Jobs than on the Philippines (52,000 to 37,900 respectively).

Author Bernard Cohen observed that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about”. Several studies have demonstrated the correlation between news coverage and the importance accorded to issues by the public. Often, lives are at stake. The status of UN emergency appeals shows that the most underfunded situations relate to countries that rarely make headlines: Lesotho, Djibouti and Mauritania, for instance.

So who sets the media agenda? In the UK, the Leveson Inquiry has highlighted the relationships between politicians, media moguls and lobbyists. But although these groups wield great influence, the media environment is more complex. For one, coverage is self-reinforcing. People tend to believe that what is reported reflects what others feel is important, so they are more inclined to read and write about these issues. The web, often cited as an information democratiser and multiplier, throws up the same dilemma. With so much out there, people rely on trusted sites, often major news outlets, to point them in the right direction. Yes, there are plenty of under-reported stories online but how does one find them without knowing what to look for?

The media has a crucial role to play in holding governments to account and we all have a duty to be responsible media consumers. At UNA-UK, we feel this responsibility is three-fold: raising awareness of ‘invisible issues’, reflecting on trends that can get overlooked in our 24-hour news flurry, and ensuring that the UN is not forgotten.



Muslims take part in a peace rally near the Philippine presidential palace as a peace agreement is signed between the government and separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front
© Dondi Tawatao/Getty Images

This double edition of *New World* (which serves as both the Autumn and Winter 2012 issues of the magazine) seeks to address all three points. In the following pages, we cover a host of under-reported issues – from road safety to toilets, from widows to the disappeared – and focus on others that receive poor or confusing coverage, such as the responsibility to protect.

In our ‘special issue’ we look at some wider trends: David Bosco of *Foreign Policy* magazine writes on the BRICS countries, the new UN Under-Secretary-General for least-developed countries looks at the impact of climate change on the world’s poorest states and former UNA-UK Chairman David Hannay reflects on Britain’s changing role in global affairs. We interview Alexander Yakovenko, Russia’s ambassador to London, on the country’s UN agenda, and I outline some

of the lessons Brazil holds for global development.

And our UN Day 2012 campaign is featured in both publications. On pages 14-15 of this magazine, our Executive Director, Phil Mulligan, calls on *New World* readers to support the UN this October by: signing our petition, displaying a poster, and recruiting supporters to UNA-UK. Campaign resources are available at www.una.org.uk/UN-Day-2012 and for those who prefer hard copies, our ‘special issue’ includes a UN Day pull-out section.

Too often, the media concentrates on the political failures of the Security Council and forgets to celebrate the life-saving work that the UN is engaged in every day. Of course the UN should be more effective, but in order to achieve this, we need to convince our governments that we care enough about the UN for them to prioritise strengthening it. ●



Is the glass filling or emptying?

**Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK's Chairman,
sets the scene for this double issue of
New World**

Sometimes the world seems like it's going to purgatory at a steady lick; sometimes the Good Samaritan stories appear ascendant. The media focus on disasters rather than successes because they sell copy. But what is really happening? Is the glass filling or emptying?

Of course it is a bit of both in the tide of human affairs. Just as a warmer climate produces stronger storms, so intensive globalisation and the pace of cross-border interactivity can magnify the peaks and troughs of economic cycles and political change. Our institutions have neither the installed capabilities nor the adaptability to provide answers and leadership; and the diffusion of power among nations and within societies is redefining the legitimacy of those who try to command.

I visited Palestine and Israel in September and met with political leaders and youths in Gaza and the West Bank, and with members of an Israeli kibbutz and college. The main political parties in Palestine are fast losing traction because they have achieved nothing for their people since the international recognition of the PLO and they are growing steadily more corrupt. "Time for new elections?", I asked. "What's the point," was the response of the younger Palestinians, "when we have lost faith with the familiar faces and new candidates are beaten off the pitch? We are stuck in a prison we are paying for ourselves." The head of the Israeli college, the closest to the Gaza border and most at risk of haphazard rocket fire, told me in his concrete-hardened office that his main objective was to teach his pupils that the people on the other side of the wire were human. Either band of 15 to 25-year-olds, if free to follow their instincts, could have walked past the tanks and the walls and started talking to the other. What is it about the fierce defence of identity that clamps down on talking through the problem? I sometimes think it is much more the insecurity of governments than the wish of ordinary people.

Governments have to follow as well as lead, or else they risk widening the gap with their constituencies. Whether in Israel or Palestine, stagnant autocracies or established democracies, what ordinary people think, say and get exercised about makes an impact. Removing the obstacles to independent creativity is just as vital as building rules-based structures. The job of those in authority is to get the balance

"Time for new elections?", I asked. "What's the point", was the response of the younger Palestinians, "when we have lost faith with the familiar faces and new candidates are beaten off the pitch? We are stuck in a prison we are paying for ourselves"

right. Perhaps they – and we too – become too obsessed with the big things: reform of the whole UN system, comprehensive conflict-prevention doctrines, peace throughout the Middle East. At the everyday level, people want to communicate with their neighbours, not shut them out, and to feel they can contribute, not wait for a handout. The younger generation, already much more savvy about a single connected world than their parents ever were, nevertheless tend to focus on doing something useful at the local level, in the company of their friends. Global awareness, local action is not such a bad precept.

So, read the marvellous range of pieces in this double edition of *New World* and get a real sense of what is going on. But much more importantly, before the week is out, find two or three other people and together try to make a small difference to the changing world around you. ●

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 a 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

● Philippines – peace at last?

The Philippine government reached a peace agreement with Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, in October 2012. The deal, which provides for a new autonomous region in the south of the country, brings an end to a conflict that has spanned four decades and killed over 120,000 people.

● Somalia's quantum leap

On 6 October 2012, Somalia's newly-elected president appointed a prime minister and began to form a cabinet – a move hailed by UN special representative Augustine Mahiga as a “quantum leap” in the country's progress. Plagued by war, famine and drought, Somalia has not had a functioning government for two decades. Since August 2011 it has enjoyed a period of relative peace: militant group Al Shabaab was expelled from the capital with the help of UN-backed African Union peacekeepers, enabling the transitional authorities to hold elections and to resume development projects. The UN has been supporting the creation of permanent democratic structures.

● Guinea transition

Guinea completed the transition to a civilian government on 6 October, when president Alpha Conde removed the last military figures from his cabinet. Conde was elected in late 2010, after the ruling military junta handed over power. Zainab Bangura, UN representative on sexual violence in conflict, has called for the perpetrators of mass rapes during the junta's reign to be brought to justice. 109 women were raped during a pro-democracy protest in September 2009.

● Mali strains region

The UN Children's Fund has corroborated at least 175 cases of child soldiers being recruited by rebels in Mali, where violence broke out after

October 2012: A Kenyan soldier serving with the UN-backed African Union Mission in Somalia is pictured through a bullet hole in the gate of the compound housing the former offices of the UN's Refugee Agency as a combat engineering team sweeps the area for unexploded ordinances and improvised explosive devices in Kismayo, southern Somalia.

© UN Photo/Stuart Price

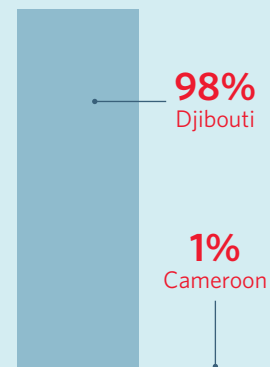
the president was ousted in March 2012. Parents receive around US \$1,000 per child. The UN estimates that 400,000 Malians have been displaced by the fighting, over half spilling into neighbouring countries. The region is already under stress from drought and crop failure. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly called on world leaders “not to abandon” the Sahel.

● DRC refugees return

Over 25,000 refugees have returned to their homes in the north of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) under a programme launched in May 2012 by the UN Refugee Agency. The agency had plans to double that number by the end of the year. But it now faces a severe funding crisis, as four acute emergencies (in the DRC, Syria, Mali and Sudan), on top of last year's record exodus of 800,000 refugees, have brought its

reserves to zero. The head of the agency, Antonio Guterres, has issued an urgent appeal for funds.

Percentage of women aged 15-49 that have undergone female genital mutilation/circumcision



Source: UNICEF Coordinated Strategy to Abandon FGMC in One Generation



● Honduras: murder and impunity

Three UN human rights experts have expressed dismay at the killing of yet another lawyer in Honduras on 2 October. Antonio Trejo Cabrera represented several agrarian cooperatives in legal disputes with powerful landowners. He was shot five times. UN rights chief Navi Pillay has called on the government to take urgent steps to combat impunity for crimes against lawyers and journalists after a spate of incidents she said amounted to “a menacing climate of insecurity”. According to the UN, Honduras has the highest murder rate in the world. Over 130 people are killed every week.

● Executions increase

Iraq executed 11 prisoners convicted of ‘terrorism’ on 7 October. Over 100 executions have been carried out since November 2011. Earlier this year, 34 inmates were killed on one day, prompting

Navi Pillay to call on the country to implement a moratorium. The death penalty has been on the wane for years, with growing support for a worldwide moratorium at the UN General Assembly. However, the number of executions in the countries that do still apply capital punishment has sharply increased, largely due to a steep rise in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

● HIV in Europe

According to UNAIDS – the system-wide UN programme on HIV/AIDS – new infections are decreasing at the global level. But in eastern Europe and central Asia, the number of people living with HIV has increased by 250% since 2001. The highest infection rates were recorded in the Russian Federation and Ukraine: 44.1 and 36.4 per 100,000, respectively. Within the European Union, Estonia topped the rankings with 27.8 new infections per 100,000.

“The Egyptian revolution ... was not the product of a fleeting moment, or a brief uprising. Nor was it the product of the winds of change of spring or autumn. Rather, this revolution [and others] in the region were triggered by the long struggle of authentic national movements ... a clear warning to those attempting to put their interests before those of their peoples”

*Mohamed Morsi, Egyptian president,
UN General Assembly 2012*

● Guinea worm success

The UN is succeeding in its efforts to eradicate guinea worm, a painful and often deadly parasitic disease contracted through contaminated water. Flea larvae in the water hatch in the digestive tract and grow into worms, some one metre long, that live inside the body and protrude through the skin. There are no effective vaccines or medicines. Instead, the UN has carried out comprehensive public health and hygiene awareness programmes in Chad, Ethiopia, Mali and South Sudan, the only countries to report cases in 2011.

In 2011, the number of networked devices surpassed the global population according to the International Telecommunications Union

● Timor-Leste: connection needed

Timor-Leste came bottom of a UN list showing the percentage of people using the internet. Just 0.9% of the population do so, according to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The ITU’s annual ‘State of Broadband’ report, which it produces with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, reports on progress in ‘digital development’.



Raj Loomba on the plight of widows and the successful campaign for an International Widows Day

A bad omen, an outcast, a loose person, a witch – this is how widows are perceived in some communities. In many developing countries, a widowed woman does not receive sympathy. Instead, she is pushed to the margins of society and left helpless: isolated, ridiculed, exploited and discriminated against. On top of losing her husband and protector, her status as a woman is also taken away.

The word ‘widow’ was almost unknown to me until my father died when I was just 10 years old. Not only did my mother have to deal with the loss of her life partner but, in her traumatised state, she was made to take off her bangles, remove her bindi and wear white clothes. My father’s passing had shut her out from the world she had once known, seemingly forever. Years later, in the midst of my wedding rituals, my mother was asked to leave. As a widow, it was said, her presence would bring bad luck to my married life. It was an agonising moment for me. I went through a range of emotions: pain, anguish, anger and a feeling of frustration. How could my mother who had brought me up with so much care and love be unlucky for me?

This memory is part of the reason why I chose to establish a foundation in my mother’s name to create awareness of the plight of widows. The Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba Memorial Foundation was set up in the UK in 1997 and launched in

India in 1999 by then-Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. As I was most familiar with the challenges facing widows in India, my initial goal was to educate the children of poor widows, 100 in each Indian state. That mission was achieved just a few years later in 2006.

During this period, I became more aware that widows in other countries faced similar challenges, especially in Africa. Women in that continent were losing husbands as a result of conflict and HIV/AIDS, leaving them vulnerable, destitute or worse. I wanted to help these widows but found there was an acute lack of available details on their situation and their needs. So the Foundation took its next big step and commissioned a research project to collect all possible information about widows worldwide.

Our task was not easy, confronting hostile attitudes, closed societies, difficult and inaccessible areas, and war-torn countries. Many were loath to impart any information. However, this did not deter us and in 2010 we produced the first comprehensive global “Widows Research Report”. This documented the gross human rights violations suffered by millions of widows, and the implications for their communities and for development more generally.

It also demonstrated that although some governments (with the help of NGOs and women’s groups) have put in place anti-discrimination laws and poverty-

alleviation measures, hardly any of this assistance is targeted. Nearly all such steps bracket widows with women in general. The result is that these programmes rarely benefit widows or fail them completely.

It was through the report that I realised just how sickeningly widows were treated in some parts of the world, and how widespread these problems really were. In certain communities, a widow is forced to conduct a week-long “cleansing ritual” involving sex with her brother-in-law or, if he is not there, her father-in-law. And if he too is absent, with another family member or person off the street.

Reading about this dehumanising treatment, I felt compelled to shine a spotlight on the suffering of widows. I decided to take my case to the United Nations and to lobby for an international day of recognition. Earlier, in 2005, the Foundation had launched an International Widows Day at the House of Lords in London. Over the next five years, using the information gained through our research project, the Foundation organised meetings at the UN to gain much-needed attention and support from international bodies.

The Loomba Foundation is proud that, as a result of its campaign, the UN General Assembly declared 23 June International Widows Day in 2010. The following year marked the day’s first observance, with a conference at the UN in New York, attended by 500 delegates and chaired by Madame Ban Soon-taek, wife of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It was a dream come true.

Now, there is finally a global day of recognition for the millions of widows and their dependants around the world. Let’s make sure it is also a catalyst for action to address the poverty and injustices they face. ●

Lord Loomba CBE is Founder of the Shrimati Pushpa Wati Loomba Memorial Foundation, which gained UN consultative status earlier this year, and Executive Chairman of the Rinku Group, a fashion and clothing company. In 2011, he was made a Liberal Democrat life peer





Etienne Krug on a WHO initiative aimed at preventing millions of the deaths caused by traffic crashes on the world's roads

On 11 May 2011, governments, international agencies, civil society organisations and private companies in more than 100 countries marked the start of an initiative which could improve the health and well-being of citizens worldwide.

The first ever Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 seeks to save millions of lives. Mandated by the UN General Assembly, the Decade is an historic opportunity for countries to stop and reverse current trends, which predict that if no action is taken, road traffic crashes will kill an estimated 1.9 million people annually by the year 2020 – up from the estimated 1.2 million lives lost today.

Globally, road traffic crashes kill nearly 150 people every hour of every day. For people aged 15–29 years, there is nothing more life-threatening; not even HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria wreak such havoc. About three quarters of those killed are men. Given that many serve as their family's sole breadwinner, road traffic crashes can plunge families into poverty, in addition to the emotional devastation they cause.

Yet there are striking differences in road traffic fatality rates across countries. In the Netherlands, for example, the estimated road traffic death rate per 100,000 population is 4.8, while in Argentina it is 13.7; in the Russian Federation 25.2; in South Africa 33.2; and in Eritrea 48.4. In other words, people in countries with the highest fatality rates are roughly 10 times more likely to die in a road traffic crash than those in countries with the lowest rates.

While the road traffic death rate in the UK is relatively low at 5.4 deaths per 100,000 population, in 2011 alone, more than 1,900 people lost their lives on the roads of Great Britain. This stark statistic underlines the fact that there is no country in the world that can consider its work done in terms of road safety.

This loss of life is tragic. It is also unnecessary, because the knowledge exists to prevent road traffic deaths and injuries. In countries such as Australia, France and Sweden, as well as the UK, deaths due

to road traffic crashes have declined by more than 50% in the past four decades. The Decade provides a framework to make progress such as this in other countries of the world.

If all countries implement the Global Plan, five million lives could be saved and 50m injuries averted across the 10-year period

Countries like the UK have an invaluable role to play in terms of giving guidance to governments in those settings where progress is desperately needed, by sharing best practice with policy and programme implementers and supporting the putting in place of the measures that are known to work. In fact, if road safety were part and parcel of international development co-operation, much could be gained during the Decade in countries where the burden of road traffic deaths and injuries is highest.

The Decade's Global Plan outlines steps towards doing so by improving the safety of roads and vehicles, enhancing emergency services, and building up road safety management more generally. It also calls for increased legislation and enforcement on using helmets, seatbelts and child restraints, as well as avoiding drink-driving and speeding.

The 2009 World Health Organisation "Global status report on road safety" highlights the fact that, in 2007, only 15% of countries had comprehensive laws that address all of these key behavioural risks. One of the Decade's stated targets is to raise that figure to 50% of countries by 2020.

While this would be an enormous achievement, having such optimal legislation in place is only a first step. This legislation needs to be accompanied by strict enforcement, brought to the attention of the public through mass media campaigns, and backed by statements of strong political will from



Children at Nam Trung Yen School in the Cau Giang District of Hanoi, Vietnam. As part of WHO's Road Safety in 10 countries project, Vietnam has closed loopholes in existing helmet laws to include the use of standardised, properly fastened helmets for riders of all ages © WHO

the highest levels of government. The results of these actions are what leads to the creation of a culture of safety and ultimately saves lives.

If all countries implement the Global Plan, five million lives could be saved and 50m injuries averted across the 10-year period. Safer mobility will also yield other benefits to health. An increase in the use of public transport will lead to cleaner air in our cities. When provision is made for pedestrians and cyclists to move about safely, people will be more inclined to walk and cycle, therefore contributing to reductions in chronic disease.

We must take the opportunity of this Decade to honour those who have lost their lives on the world's roads by acting to spare the lives of others. ●

Dr Etienne Krug is Director of the Department of Violence and Injury Prevention and Disability at the World Health Organisation. He oversaw preparations for the launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety and chairs the UN Road Safety Collaboration group. For further information about the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, visit www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action



Amy Fehilly on how young members of the Iranian Bahá'í community are being excluded from the country's universities

A widening pool of students in Iran – women, political activists, human rights campaigners, ethnic groups and religious minorities such as the Bahá'í community – are being barred from schools and universities. They are either not accepted in the first place or promptly expelled once their backgrounds become known.

At the start of this academic year, 36 Iranian universities introduced new rules that banned women from 77 different courses. In an interview with the BBC, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi speculated that the reason behind this move was to prevent women from contributing to society.

For members of the Bahá'í community, the largest religious minority in Iran, annual university enrolments have dropped to just several hundred, compared to an estimated 15,000 or more before the 1979 revolution. This deplorable decrease is due to a government policy stating that the progress of the Bahá'ís must be blocked. A government memorandum, written in 1991 at the request of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, instructs universities to expel students once it is discovered they are Bahá'ís. They too, it seems, are not allowed to contribute to society.

In response to this move, the informal Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education was set up to offer degree-level education to young Bahá'ís who had been barred from Iran's universities. The courses were taught by voluntary tutors using an online learning website. In recent years, students and tutors have been arrested, imprisoned and their books and equipment confiscated.

Last year, a global grassroots campaign called "Can You Solve This?" saw students at universities in Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, the UK and the US organising events on campus to raise awareness about the denial of access to education in Iran. In the UK alone, 5,000 letters have so far been sent to Foreign Secretary William Hague from the campaign's website.

The site also encourages visitors to sign a letter to Kamran Daneshjoo, the



Iranian high school students sit for their university exams in Tehran. © Mona Hoobehfekar/AFP/Getty Images

Iranian Minister for Science, Research and Technology, asking: "Do you not appreciate that by blocking access to higher education for your own citizens, you are retarding the progress of your own country?"

Iran's unwillingness to embrace the values of tolerance and mutual understanding is counterproductive for the country's growth and development. Education is the primary driver of progress, so how can the Iranian authorities be acting for the benefit of their country by preventing Iranian citizens from attending university?

Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which Iran has ratified, enshrines the right of all persons to education, as well as the need for education – at primary, secondary and tertiary level – to be made equally accessible to all.

Past events have shown that denial of education to individuals or to entire segments of society can lead to divisions and oppression. In the years prior to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the proportion of the Tutsi minority in schools fell to just 7%. In apartheid South Africa and in the

US prior to the civil rights movement, young black people were either afforded second-class schooling or barred from access to universities designated as "white". Steve Biko, the student anti-apartheid activist who was killed in South African police custody in 1977, famously remarked that "the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed".

Most notoriously, the Nazis used the German school curriculum to turn popular opinion against the country's Jews. Today in Iran, teachers, school management and clerics frequently harass Bahá'í students, and have been known to incite violence against them.

With the denial of education blighting the lives of a growing number of Iran's youth, students involved with the "Can You Solve This?" campaign are hoping to raise their voices again, by calling on national governments, UN agencies and the UN special rapporteur on the right to education, Kishore Singh, to take action to defend the right of equal access to education, and allow the young of every nation to fulfil their potential. ●

Amy Fehilly is a third-year student of history and Persian language at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London she is involved with the "Can You Solve This?" campaign



M. Sohail and Sue Cavill explain why we urgently need to reinvent the toilet

The sanitation target of UN Millennium Development Goal 7 – to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation – is significantly off track. Worldwide, 2.5 billion people have inadequate sanitation facilities or, to be blunt, no proper toilets.

The right to sanitation has been widely acknowledged and reaffirmed. In 2008, the UN Human Rights Council appointed an independent expert to monitor and work on the fulfilment of states' obligations related to drinking water and sanitation. In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that recognised these rights as being “essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”.

But around the world, 1.1 billion people still defecate in the open. Many cities still dispose of their untreated fecal sludge in fresh waters. The impacts are far-reaching: from the attendance and enrolment of girls in school to the thwarting of economic development. One study by the World Bank found

Contaminated water in the Karial slum, Dhaka, Bangladesh, where many people are forced to practice open defecation © UN Photo/Kibae Park



that 18 African countries – including Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania – lose between 1% and 2.5% of GDP every year due to poor sanitation, which also contributes significantly to the 700,000 African children who die every year from diarrhoea.

The standard approach to improving sanitation is based on the concept of a “sanitation ladder” consisting of four rungs: practising open defecation; using an unimproved sanitation facility (i.e. one that does not ensure hygienic separation of fecal matter from human contact); using a shared facility; and, finally, using an improved facility. But the ‘business as usual’ approach to scaling up improved sanitation is not working. In many places, sanitation technologies are improvised or fail due to a lack of longer-term sustainability.

Action to improve these technologies should be driven by evidence of what works reliably, sustainably and at scale. There is a growing body of evidence that people want a toilet they can aspire to, one they can go out and buy and install once and for all, just as they would with other household appliances or mobile phones. In this regard, there is potential to introduce ‘leapfrogging’ technology in the sanitation sector.

Universities have a key contribution to make in innovating and supplying appropriate technologies that meet market needs for scalability, as well as lessons on how to deliver sanitation sustainably in particularly challenging situations (including urban areas) throughout the developed and developing world.

In 2012, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched ‘Reinventing the Toilet’, a challenge to invent a waterless, hygienic toilet that is safe and affordable, does not have to be connected to electricity or a sewer or continuous water supply, and will transform waste into energy, clean water and plant fertiliser. The challenge also stipulated that the toilet must operate at a cost of five US cents a day and be a truly aspirational “next-generation” product that everyone will want to use – in wealthy countries as well as in developing nations

Loughborough University developed a prototype toilet which transforms human waste into biological charcoal to provide heat, minerals for soil conditioning, and water for flushing and hand-washing. It uses a process called hydrothermal carbonisation, which kills all pathogens to create safe to handle, valuable material, and uses power from heat generated during processing. The toilet is designed to work in both single-family and multi-user contexts, with daily running costs of just a few pence per person.

We hope that this project will: complement efforts to achieve the sanitation target of the Millennium Development Goals; build and test the evidence on sanitation facilities that work at scale; and mobilise all (including the domestic private sector) to improve access to safe sanitation worldwide. ●

M. Sohail (Khan) is Professor of Sustainable Infrastructure at Loughborough University and Sue Cavill is an independent water and sanitation specialist associated with the Water, Engineering and Development Centre at Loughborough. Their team took second place in the Gates Foundation challenge

One every five days - disappearances in Sri Lanka

Ruki Fernando on those who go missing and those who have been left behind



Ruki Fernando is a Sri Lankan human rights activist who has worked closely with families of the country's disappeared on documentation, local campaigns and international advocacy

AT 2.31pm on 21 August 2012, a 32-year-old woman sent a text message to her relatives saying she had been taken to the Criminal Investigation Department in Vavuniya in the north of Sri Lanka. No one has heard from her since.

Businessman Ramasamy Prabakaran filed a claim against the authorities after he was detained, tortured and subsequently found innocent in court. Two days before the hearing this February, he was abducted by armed men in Colombo, the capital.

Lalith Weeraraj and Kugan Muruganatham, activists who supported families of Sri Lanka's disappeared, became victims themselves on 9 December 2011, on the eve of the commemoration of Human Rights Day. Over 1,000 people protested against their abduction.

Prageeth Ekneligoda, a journalist and cartoonist critical of the present government, has not been seen since 24 January 2010. He disappeared two days before the Sri Lankan presidential election.

Dozens of people, including Catholic priest Francis Joseph, witnessed Sinnathurai Sasitharan, a prominent leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, surrender to the army during the final stages of the civil war in 2009. All of them are now missing.

For decades, Sri Lankans of all stripes have suffered enforced disappearances. In the 1970s and 1980s, tens of thousands of young people from the majority Sinhalese community were disappeared. Since then, most victims have been minorities, with Tamils constituting the main target. During the last months of the war and its immediate aftermath, thousands of Tamils are thought to have disappeared, some, according to eyewitnesses, after surrendering to, or being arrested by, the armed forces. The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), which was set up by the Sri Lankan government in 2010, received information about 3,596 disappearance complaints. It concluded that a further, specialised investigation into disappearances was needed.

The end of the war has not brought an end to these abuses. Based on reported cases (including attempted abductions), someone is disappeared every five days in Sri Lanka. Over 50 people have been taken from their loved ones in the first six months of this year.

The rationale behind these attacks – both during the conflict and now – appears to be silencing dissent, whether this dissent comes from armed groups, journalists, aid workers, human rights defenders, members of the clergy or anyone else. The UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances has submitted 12,460 cases to Sri Lanka, of which 5,671 remain outstanding. Only Iraq has a worse record.

Together with friends and colleagues, I have accompanied those left behind – mostly wives and mothers – in the search for their loved ones and for the truth, documenting their stories, and supporting their complaints to local bodies. We witnessed the callous treatment they received from the police and Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, and the general unwillingness to search for the disappeared or to hold perpetrators accountable. “You wouldn’t talk like that if it was your daughter,” one mother said to the LLRC last November.

In November 2011, the head of the Sri Lankan delegation to the UN Committee Against Torture declared confidently that the disappeared journalist Prageeth Ekneligoda was living overseas. Upon returning to Sri Lanka, he admitted in court that he was not actually aware of Ekneligoda’s whereabouts. Earlier this year, when specific information about the location of two disappeared activists was provided to the national Human Rights Commission, it refused to undertake an immediate investigation, despite a clear mandate to do so.

The UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances has submitted 12,460 cases to Sri Lanka, of which 5,671 remain outstanding. Only Iraq has a worse record

Even worse, some of the families of those missing have been intimidated and ridiculed. So too have many people who have supported them in their quest for truth and justice, including human rights defenders, journalists, politicians, religious leaders and lawyers. Many have been labelled “traitors” or “terrorist sympathisers”. Commemorations and campaigns for those who have disappeared have been banned, disrupted and restricted. Organisers and participants have been threatened and harassed.

The failure of domestic mechanisms to act has compelled many families to seek international assistance for their loved ones. While the support and concern from human rights groups has been welcomed, many are frustrated that the international community has not been able to provide tangible help. There is also disappointment at the unwillingness to put real pressure on those involved. For me, the main glimmer of hope was the



courage of the families of the disappeared, who refuse to accept defeat. However powerless I felt, I am honoured to have been part of their struggle.

It is now three and a half years since the end of Sri Lanka's long-running civil war. But until the families of the disappeared receive the support and compassion they deserve from the government and society at large, until their quest for truth, justice and accountability is over, until democracy and the rule of law are restored, a sustainable peace will remain elusive.

In line with the provisions of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, families should receive financial and legal support; access to counselling; prompt assistance with the issuing of relevant documentation, including death certificates; and full cooperation by national authorities to investigate cases. They should be free to hold memorials and to protest peacefully if adequate action is not taken. Reform of legal and other institutions, notably the Human Rights Commission, is also needed.

At the international level, pressure should be put on the Sri Lankan government to ratify the Convention and to allow the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances to visit the country. The

Group has had an invitation pending for six years. This could help shed light on the fate of the disappeared and would also serve as a sign of political commitment by the government to address and prevent enforced disappearance. The engagement of countries in Central and South America that have experienced and found ways of dealing with mass disappearances is also crucial.

But what is needed above all is for all Sri Lankans to wholeheartedly join the families of the disappeared in their search for truth, justice and accountability. ●

Media rights activists hold up posters bearing the image of missing Sri Lankan cartoonist Prageeth Ekneligoda during a protest rally in Colombo on 10 August 2010

© Ishara S.KODIKARA/ AFP/Getty Images

“‘Enforced disappearance’ is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorisation, support or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.” - International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

DO SOMETHING



*Phil Mulligan is
Executive Director
of UNA-UK*

United Nations Day - 24 October - is an opportunity to reflect on all that the UN achieves. Each year there is plenty to celebrate as the UN makes progress across a huge range of issues. The UN provides opportunities for peaceful diplomacy on highly sensitive and challenging topics. The UN's many agencies offer vital interventions such as humanitarian relief, support for development, and protection of the environment. Of course there are imperfections in the structures and systems of the UN. This is understandable given the rapidly-changing world in which the UN now operates. Such challenges do not mean the UN is no longer of vital importance. Indeed, it is almost impossible to imagine a world as stable and peaceful as ours without the UN. That said, there are still a number of ongoing conflicts around the world and it is the UN that provides the legitimacy, mandate and opportunity for such conflicts to be resolved through negotiation and compromise.

Moving towards the non-violent resolution of disputes is far from easy. To date, it has proved impossible in Syria. The geopolitical complexities of the Syrian case illustrate weaknesses within the UN system at a political level. However, the humanitarian response to such atrocities demonstrates the vital importance of the UN and effectiveness of UN agencies. Take, for example, the way the UN is responding to the 250,000 refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries. In the short term these people need shelter, food, water, security, and medical provision, while in the longer term they will need support to return home and reconstruct their lives. No other organisation can manage and deliver the necessary response in a comparable way. And it is the UN that has allowed, first Annan, and now Brahimi, as envoys to the country, to keep open, however narrowly, the channels for a negotiated solution. Brahimi's appointment is extremely significant as the fierce determination with which he will apply himself offers hope that when the high-water mark of blood and suffering has finally been reached, a route through the UN will be found for establishing a more stable situation on the ground.

For the sake of the millions of people affected by conflicts in Syria and elsewhere, we, 'the peoples', cannot give up on the UN. We must work to strengthen those parts of the UN that remain fit for purpose and reshape those that need adjustment. Since the last UN Day, several significant developments have been accomplished. Charles Taylor has begun a 50-year jail term for crimes against humanity; a new Arms Trade Treaty has been proposed; South Sudan has transitioned to independence; Burma is coming in from the cold; the Rio+20 conference pledged to create sustainability goals; and the UN has set in motion a process for establishing a new post-Millennium Development Goals framework.

UN Day allows for the recognition of multilateral successes and such recognition forms part of the process for re-inspiring us global citizens to strive harder for further progress towards a safer, fairer, more sustainable world. This month, I am calling on our members and supporters to do three things: first, sign our petition to demonstrate to the UK government the support that exists for the UN in this country. Second, show your support by displaying one of our UN Day 2012 posters. And finally, help us to build a critical mass of support for the UN by asking interested friends and colleagues to become UNA-UK supporters.

By signing up thousands more supporters, we can significantly increase our voice and impact so that UNA-UK is strengthened for all the work we have ahead of us.



**A UN observer documents the
damage done by heavy shelling
in Homs, Syria in June 2012**
© UN Photo/David Manyua



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE UN

UNA-UK believes that the UN is an essential tool for building a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. But in order for it to be effective, it needs the support of governments and individuals alike. To mark UN Day 2012, we are asking you to show that you care about the Organisation.

1 Sign our petition

Visit www.una.org.uk/UN-Day-2012 to sign our support petition, or complete the form on page 15 of the *New World* special issue. And please help us to publicise it widely, including through Facebook and Twitter. The petition will be transmitted to the UK government and the UN in New York.

2 Show your support

Display our UN Day 2012 posters in your office, university, school and community to show your support for the UN and UNA-UK. The posters are available from www.una.org.uk/UN-Day-2012 and samples are included on pages 13 and 16 of the *New World* special issue.

3 Get others involved

Encourage your friends and colleagues to become supporters of UNA-UK, by giving them one of the enclosed postcards or directing them to www.una.org.uk/interest. Signing up is completely free and supporters will receive information about the UN and UNA-UK, as well as opportunities to get more involved with our work.

This month, help us to demonstrate that there is a critical mass of support for the United Nations in the UK and beyond.

Beyond intervention

Alexandra Buskie describes the full range of duties that underlie the responsibility to protect

“The responsibility to protect is a concept whose time has come. For too many millions of victims, it should have come much earlier”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General



Alexandra Buskie is UNA-UK's Responsibility to Protect Programme Officer

THE responsibility to protect (R2P) provides a framework for preventing and halting four crimes that shock our moral conscience and threaten international peace and security: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Adopted unanimously at the UN World Summit in 2005, the principle affirms that each state has the responsibility to protect its populations from these crimes, and that the international community has an obligation to provide assistance to states at risk, and to respond in a timely and decisive manner if prevention and assistance are unsuccessful. A plan for implementing R2P was outlined by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2009, which separated the principle into three sections, or “pillars” (see box opposite).

Although the three pillars comprise a large variety of tools, from institution-building to human rights promotion, mediation to fact finding missions and economic sanctions to arms embargoes, R2P is often misunderstood as a synonym for military intervention – a measure that can be utilised, but only when all peaceful means have been exhausted. Several states, and indeed NGOs, view the principle as an extension of the divisive humanitarian intervention doctrine of the 1990s (the “right to intervene”), rather than a continuum of engagement and assistance firmly anchored in state sovereignty. Media coverage generally reinforces this perception, focussing on cases where intervention is being considered, which is symptomatic of the wider prioritisation of conflict resolution over prevention.

R2P provides for a much broader approach, also prescribing longer term capacity building and non-coercive measures in the second pillar that can be implemented without requiring UN Security Council authorisation. For the general public, these preventive actions remain largely unnoticed – unreported, vaguely understood and, for all intents and purposes, invisible.

The following examples provide an insight into the diverse and crucial work taking place behind the

“The objectives of the Office for the Prevention of Genocide are very specific: to collect information on those situations which involve egregious violations of human rights which, if not halted, might also lead to genocide; to act as an early warning mechanism; and to alert the Secretary-General and the Security Council, the United Nations system as a whole”

—Francis Deng, UN Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide (2007–2012)

“Isolated human rights abuses and displacement are often precursors to widespread violence and many NGOs operate in areas where these events occur. As outside witnesses, international NGOs can help prevent or slow down violence simply by virtue of our presence. NGOs can also raise the alarm, alerting the world to new threats and reporting on the conditions that we see on the ground”

—Erin Weir, Protection and Advocacy Advisor, Norwegian Refugee Council

“R2P is an important international norm, to which all UN member states have committed. Too much emphasis is sometimes put on the third pillar: intervention. It's important – but even more important are the clear responsibilities of states themselves to prevent these crimes, and of the international community. The UK is working hard on this: Foreign Secretary William Hague recently launched an initiative to bring renewed energy to preventing sexual violence in conflict. We want to create a culture that deters these appalling acts, and ensures that perpetrators are punished”

—Vijay Rangarajan, R2P Focal Point, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

R2P: promise, pillars and practice

PILLAR I – State responsibilities	PILLAR II – International assistance	PILLAR III – A timely response
<p>According to the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, in which all UN member states endorsed R2P, each state has a responsibility to prevent and protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.</p>	<p>The Summit Outcome Document also stipulates that the international community should “encourage and help” states to exercise this responsibility, including through capacity-building and assistance to states that are under stress before crises and conflicts break out.</p>	<p>If a state fails to protect its populations, the Summit agreed that the international community has a responsibility to use “diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means” and “to take collective action in a timely and decisive manner” if these prove inadequate.</p>
<p>States should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ respect human rights and condemn hate speech and incitement ▪ include minorities in public life, economic development and poverty alleviation ▪ implement human rights and international humanitarian law ▪ become parties to the International Criminal Court (ICC) 	<p>The international community can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ encourage states to meet their responsibilities under Pillar One ▪ help them to exercise this responsibility, including through building their capacity to protect ▪ assist states under threat of imminent crises ▪ support international monitoring and early-warning mechanisms 	<p>The international community can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ use non-coercive measures such as negotiation, mediation, public advocacy, condemnation and monitoring, and threatening ICC referral ▪ apply coercive measures such as sanctions, asset freezes, travel bans, embargoes, ICC referral and, if these fail, military deployment, including the creation of security/no-fly zones
<p>In practice:</p> <p>The Kenyan government, aware of the need to alleviate ongoing tensions in the country following the 2008 post-election crisis, is undertaking a number of peace building and conflict resolution initiatives.</p> <p>Reforms include institutionalising traditional and community-based peace structures, establishing youth empowerment schemes and employment programmes, and enforcing the reduction and control of small arms and light weapons.</p>	<p>In practice:</p> <p>The Office of the UN Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and R2P provides extensive training for government officials, UN staff, and NGO representatives on how governments can best manage tensions within their populations.</p> <p>In 2009, the UK Department for International Development launched a £60m security sector and police reform programme for the Democratic Republic of the Congo that aims to strengthen executive and civilian oversight and ensure these services protect the poor.</p>	<p>In practice:</p> <p>In 2011, the UN Security Council took a number of measures to prevent the Gaddafi regime in Libya from committing mass atrocity crimes, including an ICC referral, arms embargoes, travel bans and asset seizure.</p> <p>When these peaceful measures did not change the regime’s behaviour, the Council adopted Resolution 1973, which authorised states to take “all necessary measures ... to protect civilians” and enforce a no-fly zone under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.</p>

The three pillars are mutually reinforcing, of equal strength and have no set sequence. Engagement should be flexible, take place as early as possible and be informed by the situation on the ground. All pillars comprise both preventive and responsive dimensions.

scenes, both in the field and in terms of policymaking. Nonetheless, when a crisis looms, longer-term assistance initiatives need to be supplanted by more direct preventive measures, as described in pillar three.

There are, of course, legitimate concerns about the misuse of the military measures in this pillar. Disagreements about the interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya, in particular NATO’s subsequent actions in the country, have had an inhibiting influence on the Council’s approach to preventing mass atrocities in Syria. Fortunately, member states are beginning to engage in fruitful discussion on regulating and monitoring the use of force, with Brazil advancing a concept in the General Assembly calling for “responsibility while protecting”.

As it is only the coercive dimension of R2P, specifically the use of force, that causes controversy, the Security Council’s current divisions represent a failure of political

will, rather than a failure of the R2P principle. Long-term, structural prevention of mass atrocities is not beholden to Security Council agreement and there is a wide spectrum of action that governments, UN agencies and civil society organisations can take. The vital behind-the-scenes work to prevent mass atrocities demonstrates the principle’s continuing relevance, and its utility in tackling some of the root causes of these egregious crimes.

Nevertheless, it is essential that the international community continues to discuss the application of the more robust features of R2P in order to bolster efforts to persuade and dissuade states unwilling to uphold their responsibilities. Only when there is a credible threat of the use of force that can be applied legitimately will the international community possess the diplomatic leverage to be truly able to move R2P from promise to practice for short-term, imminent and ongoing threats. ●



New World Jan-Mar 1999 – one of this editor's favourite covers from Harold's era

Left to right: Michael Blackshaw, Paul Mrazek (author of this tribute), Som Vichet (UNA Cambodia) and Harold Stern (off-duty photographer for a moment)
© Flickr.com/Harold Stern

Tribute to Harold Stern (1928–2012)

New World joins UNA-UK members in commemorating Harold Stern. A dedicated member, Harold served the Association in many guises, including as Editor of this publication, Chair of Conference and UNA-UK Vice-Chairman, until he stepped down in 2004. Below, we feature a warm tribute from Paul Mrazek, UNA London & Southeast Region, with contributions from Janet Blackman (North-East Region) and Andrew Boakes (Eastern Region).

Harold joined the UN Students' Association at Queen Mary College, University of London, after completing his national service with the Royal Signals, including in Egypt and Kenya. During the 1950s-60s – whilst building a successful business career and raising a family – he chaired UNA Ealing branch and was active in the London and Southeast Region, eventually becoming a Vice-Chair and Trustee.

His no-nonsense style made an impact on everyone he met. Although he ruffled a few feathers and did not suffer fools gladly, he won admiration for speaking out without fear or favour, and for his conviction and integrity. The Committee benefitted greatly from his private-sector experience and practical knowledge of what made companies succeed – and fail.

In 1992, Harold was invited by the UNA-UK Board to review the Association's operations, governance and finance processes. The reforms he initiated led to significant improvements and his forensic approach was invaluable during a difficult period for UNA-UK. He developed computing skills when he was well into his 60s, and applied this knowledge to the Association's fledgling website. He was clearly a highly talented man who could have been successful in a number of professions.

The epitome of 'hands-on', Harold virtually worked full-time for UNA-UK, with no remuneration. He was Editor of *New World* and its principal photographer – a monumental

undertaking, often keeping him up into the early hours. But he loved this part of his work and the finished product was a great source of pride to him.

At UNA-UK Conferences, too, Harold made his mark – a master of the rules and procedures, never at a loss for words, always knowledgeable and passionate. There was no doubt that whenever he contributed to UNA-UK's work, he did so with deep respect and concern for the UN, what it stands and strives for, and the way in which it represents (and is itself the achievement of) so many individuals seeking to find solutions to the crises of our human existence. He never forgot that.

For 20 years, Harold and his partner Sandra were regulars on UNA study tours. Outwardly opposites, they formed a warm and engaging double act, and fellow travellers will recall lively discussions in buses, trains and planes, and in good restaurants. Whether overlooking the towers of New York or the plains of the Serengeti, Harold could be relied upon to stimulate the conversation.

Harold's last years were beset by serious illness, leaving him confined to his home. He dealt with his incapacity philosophically and with dignity, and found things to occupy him, such as compiling a wonderful photographic record of his life, family and travels: www.flickr.com/photos/harold_stern

He is remembered by many of us as a sincere, supportive, generous and loyal friend. Kind and caring, he gave voice to the concerns and views of the ordinary UNA-UK member and was a champion of the UNA-UK staff and volunteers, all of whom he treated with respect and consideration, as attested by those who were present at his funeral, many years after they had ceased to be in daily contact.

We will miss his robust style and feisty attitude. UNA-UK has lost a committed advocate, dedicated supporter and good friend.



Rohingya refugee in an unofficial camp in Bangladesh © Andrea Pistolesi/Getty Images

Remember the Rohingyas

UNA Brighton & Hove branch recognises the recent changes in the Burmese regime and welcomes greatly the freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi to play an active part in the political system. In that context, we understand the wish to relax some of the restrictions on relations with the regime. However, we remain extremely concerned about the prevailing situation, especially recent news of the oppression and killings of the Rohingya people, which sadly seems to be receiving relatively little attention in the UK and internationally.

These events are part of a long history of repression of ethnic minorities in Burma. War continues in Kachin state, with the Karen people being raped, tortured and killed on a massive scale, and many fleeing into Thailand and China. Nothing seems to have changed over the past 20 years, except perhaps that the Burmese army has increased its control. Thus for the tribal peoples and ethnic minorities, nothing has changed, and the United Nations remains largely silent. This surely is something that we should be urging the UN to address.

Joyce Edmond-Smith, Secretary,
UNA-UK Brighton & Hove branch

Syria shame

The situation in Syria continues to deteriorate and cause grave concern. In August, the Organisation of Islamic

Cooperation (OIC) suspended Syria's membership because it could not support a regime which murders its own people. In my opinion, the UN should follow suit. The OIC has demonstrated leadership and regard for basic humanitarian principles, which is more than can presently be said for the Security Council. Surely the UN should be the vanguard. Even the General Assembly has (rightly) condemned the Security Council for not taking any action to try to resolve the crisis.

That said, we should not be surprised at the disgraceful refusal of Russia and China to back effective action, given their own respective human rights records. I believe that in both those countries, ordinary people hold the same opinion as the vast majority of the international community and desire to help those suffering in Syria. It is the Chinese and Russian leaders who must accept severe condemnation for standing on the sidelines and, in effect, condoning the actions of the Assad regime. They are putting politics above the law and playing politics with lives.

When peace is restored, I hope that a new government in Syria will say to them: "You did not help us in our time of need and we believe that your peoples would have wanted you to."

David J Thomas
Porthcawl

Collecting for your branch

As a long-standing collector for UNA Southern Counties Region, I am writing to share my experiences. I became acquainted with the science of collecting as a junior and joined the UNA Newbury & District branch committee. In those days, we had a dozen or more collectors, including long-standing branch members Alec and Jean McCurdy, and Sue Thompson, who would collect over £100 before lunchtime.

I received training and guidance from Algar Reed, the great Southern Counties Regional Officer, and also benefitted hugely from support (and donations) from former branch officers, who shared their experiences with me.

Here are my 'tips' for a successful collection: first, select a good venue, such as a supermarket with a good flow of people. Second, position yourself where people can see you – if you see someone going in, you have a "double whammy" effect, catching them on the way out! Third, ensure you stand out, with sashes, posters or display boards. One fellow collector, Andrew Rutter of Winchester, uses an eye-catching giant sandwich board.

Fourth, ensure you have good literature to hand – many people will have questions or want further information. Fifth – be informed! The value of interacting with people is that you have the opportunity to engage in conversation and to reinforce UNA-UK's message. What is the United Nations? How does it help people in this country? What does UNA-UK do to support it? Most importantly, enlist a good team of helpers.

Clearly we need to do more to explain what UNA-UK is and does to the wider public. This was identified as a priority during consultations on the Association's new strategic plan.

Graeme Panting
Newbury

Editor's note: these are great tips for branches and regions wishing to raise funds for their activities

Outreach grants – Towards nuclear zero

UNA-UK is delighted to announce that it has again maintained a fund to help branches, regions and nations organise activities around the UK.

This year's grants will be awarded only for events and activities focussed around UNA-UK's 'Towards Zero' programme on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

You can apply for grants of between £100 and £500 for events that will be held between 1 November 2012 and 30 June 2013.

Applications must be received by 31 March 2013.

Full details are available from James Kearney, Peace & Security Programmes Manager, on kearney@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3446.

Send your letters to:

Natalie Samarasinghe
UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court
London SW1A 2EL
email: samarasinghe@una.org.uk

Crossroads: Arms Trade Treaty negotiations

Ben Donaldson writes that an Arms Trade Treaty, some 20 years in the making, now looks within reach, but warns that negotiators must navigate the trade-off between a watered-down text acceptable to all and a robust treaty that many could refuse to sign



Ben Donaldson
is UNA-UK
Communications &
Campaigns Officer

EVERY year, almost three quarters of a million people die from armed violence, while millions more suffer indirectly. The insecurity arising from violence affects lives and livelihoods, preventing people from working and going to school, and adversely affecting trade, transport and basic services. A significant part of this suffering is due to the unregulated and irresponsible trade in arms, which puts weapons in the hands of criminals, insurgents and repressive regimes.

After years of campaigning by NGOs including UNA-UK, the UN General Assembly voted in 2006 to start work on a treaty to regulate the arms trade. The purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is not disarmament but control through legally-binding standards.

UNA-UK believes that an effective treaty should:

- cover the widest possible range of weapons, parts and components, including ammunition
- apply to existing exports and defence contracts
- stop arms being sold to repressive governments like the Assad regime in Syria
- prevent the diversion of arms to conflict-affected regions, as has occurred in Somalia and Afghanistan, for example
- require signatory states to build in strong and binding provisions on transparency and reporting

Last-minute blockage

In July 2012, the six-year treaty making process culminated in a month of negotiations that, according to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, aimed to “agree a robust, effective and legally-binding ATT”. Until the final morning of the conference, agreement looked plausible. Then, at the eleventh hour, the United States, followed

by a handful of others, including Russia, derailed the process by asking for more time to consider the draft text. They were able to do so because agreement depends on consensus – a much-criticised element of the ATT process.

Although disappointing, UNA-UK remains confident that a robust treaty is within reach. Indeed, the head of the UK delegation, Jo Adamson, called the outcome “a pause, not a failure”. At the end of the negotiations, over 90 states issued a statement saying they are “determined to secure an Arms Trade Treaty as soon as possible”, and Ban Ki-moon noted that the conference had yielded “considerable common ground” for countries to build on. Negotiations now look set to resume at a further ATT conference, likely to be held in March 2013.

Why the delay?

On the surface, it is easy to surmise that the US – the world’s largest arms exporter – simply does not want a treaty. However, the country already has comparatively strong export controls and the draft text is based on best practice from regulations that exist in a number of states. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has noted that the ATT negotiations offer an “opportunity to promote the same high standards for the entire international community that the US and other responsible arms exporters already have in place”. Furthermore, the US delegation to the conference stated that it had no “core” objections to the draft text, which had been significantly weakened during negotiations to meet its red lines.

So why the delaying tactics? Many commentators believe that with the US presidential elections fast approaching, the Obama administration is loath to make any major international commitment, especially one arousing strong, albeit ill-founded, objections from the country’s pro-gun lobby which has erroneously linked the ATT to both domestic gun use and disarmament. It is

likely that agreement on a text – whether or not the US actually signs up to it – will be used by the Republicans for political point-scoring. It appears that the US has diffused this tension by deferring any decision-making process to after the election.

It is, of course, worth noting that the US was not alone in delaying negotiations and that other states used its position as cover for their own objections to the ATT.

A blessing in disguise?

The inability of states to agree a treaty at the July conference was widely reported as a failure. Yet closer scrutiny of the draft text might lead campaigners to view it instead as a narrow escape. In the quest for consensus, many provisions had been weakened so significantly that the treaty under discussion is a far cry from the robust and effective mechanism that NGOs had hoped for.

As it stands, the draft is not wide enough in scope, nor does it do enough to inhibit transfers where a substantial risk of misuse and diversion exists. There are three main areas of concern.

1. It does not provide for adequate regulation of ammunition or the export of weapons in part or component form, and also exempts existing defence contracts.
2. Given the impracticability of enforcement by an international body, an effective treaty must include strong, binding provisions on transparency and reporting, so that parliaments around the world can help scrutinise implementation.
3. The provisions relating to preventing transfers from falling into the hands of human rights abusers are so weak that some believe it would take an imminent genocide (with evidence to prove it), before they are activated.

Had this watered-down ATT been adopted, we would now be dealing with the consequences of a lowest common denominator treaty unlikely to bring about the improvements we all desire. Every month that passes without a properly regulated arms trade is, of course, another month in which tyrants and criminals can acquire and abuse weapons with impunity. But given that it took decades to build the momentum and political will necessary for the ATT negotiations, there is no telling how long it would take to reopen discussions to improve an ineffective treaty.

“There are more international laws regulating the trade of bananas and of dinosaur bones than weapons”

Keeping up the pressure

The creation of a robust treaty without these weaknesses is not the quixotic ambition of NGOs and activists – it is the preferred outcome for the vast majority of UN member states. A weak treaty risks institutionalising an unacceptably low regulatory standard for the arms trade that could end up legitimising irresponsible transfers and giving legal protection to those selling weapons, thereby fuelling conflict and instability.

While a treaty with broad participation is, of course, desirable, UNA-UK strongly feels that a robust treaty – even if not all states are willing to sign it in the short term – will prove far more effective in the long run than a universal treaty to which all states can subscribe and subsequently ignore. ●

Routes to an ATT

The tyranny of the minority

A further consensus-based conference is likely to be scheduled for March 2013.

Whilst the majority of states, including the UK, will be aiming for a robust ATT, we are likely to see more proposals that would compromise the treaty's effectiveness in order to satisfy all parties. But if obstructive states do yield some ground, a universally-agreed treaty – a global baseline – could be adopted.

As with the July 2012 conference, there is a possibility that agreement on a treaty might not be reached at all and that some states will seek to postpone negotiations further. If this is the case, there are two possible routes for supportive states.

Take it or leave it

If the 2013 conference does not adopt a treaty, those states keen to press ahead should push for the draft text to be put to a vote in the General Assembly, where the process need not be constricted by consensus and where the strong majority of states in favour of adopting an ATT can make their voices heard.

While a vote unbound by consensus would allow reluctant states to opt out, this route is more likely to produce a robust treaty. And more signatories could be gathered at a later stage.

Do you want to take this outside?

If the 2013 conference does not adopt a treaty and states are unwilling to go to the General Assembly, willing parties could consider proceeding outside the UN system.

This option is not without risk. It could create a messy dual-track situation or lead to further delays as new procedural rules would have to be agreed. And states would be able to opt out of the process. But, as the landmine and cluster munitions treaties have shown – both of which were negotiated outside the UN system – more states can be brought in over time.

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

UK human rights record

Earlier this year, the UK's human rights performance was scrutinised by the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, under which the records of each member state are regularly examined. A total of 132 recommendations were made, of which 73 were accepted. The UK, which plans to stand for election to the Council in 2014-16, has released a comprehensive paper on each of the recommendations.

UNA-UK submitted a response to the UK's review to the Joint Committee on Human Rights, in which it raised a number of priority actions for the UK to consider, including:

- Ratifying the UN conventions on enforced disappearances and on migrant workers, and the International Labour Organisation convention on domestic workers
- Ensuring that the Equality & Human Rights Commission will remain fully independent and capable of acting on its mandate
- Removing the final three reservations to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Considering an application procedure for stateless persons

UNA-UK also asked the Joint Committee for guidance on how the UK's review could best be monitored by Parliament and civil society.

W To read the evidence and find out more, visit www.una.org.uk

UNA-UK: we need a strong Arms Trade Treaty

UNA-UK is continuing its campaign for a robust Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) after negotiations in July ended without agreement on a text. While disappointed by the outcome, UNA-UK is confident that a strong treaty is within our reach. We are now pushing with our partners

in Oxfam, Amnesty and Saferworld for weaknesses in the draft text to be addressed, and for renewed negotiations in March 2013 to be conducted not by consensus – which effectively gives any state the option of 'vetoing' the treaty – but by a majority vote.

W See pages 20-21 for an article by UNA-UK Communications & Campaigns Officer Ben Donaldson, and visit www.una.org.uk for more information on our work

R2P launch

UNA-UK is delighted to announce the launch of its Responsibility to Protect (R2P) policy programme, with generous funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (peace grant). The programme – Protecting populations from atrocities: implementing the Responsibility to Protect – will seek to: consolidate a national R2P network; build political support for R2P in the UK and internationally; and generate grassroots engagement with the principle.

W See page 16-17 for an article by Alexandra Buskie, UNA-UK's R2P Programme Officer, and visit www.una.org.uk for more information on our work

Syria envoy

Although hopes for a negotiated solution remain slim, UNA-UK wrote an open letter to Lakhdar Brahimi, who took over as UN-Arab League envoy to Syria on 1 September. UNA-UK strongly believes that Syria needs effective diplomacy, now, to underpin discussions on military action, and even more so when the guns go silent. The letter contained recommendations on options that he could pursue to break the deadlock in the UN Security Council and build consensus with key actors in the region.

W Visit www.una.org.uk to read the letter and an article on the situation, and to listen to BBC Radio 4 and Newsnight interviews with our Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock

Trident Commission evidence

In August, UNA-UK submitted evidence to the Trident Commission, an independent cross-party group set up by the British American Security Information Council (BASIS) to examine the UK's nuclear weapons policy. UNA-UK's evidence focused on whether or not the UK should remain a nuclear weapon state, and what more the UK could do to promote global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and security. Recommendations included a


"We should never forget that for many in the world the closest relative of poverty is injustice. Development has never been just about aid or money, but I am proud that Britain is a country that keeps its promises to the poorest in the world"

David Cameron, UK Prime Minister, speaking at the UN General Assembly on 26 September 2012



© UN Photo/Marco Castro

suggestion that the UK demonstrates international leadership in this area by significantly reducing the prominence of nuclear weapons in its security doctrine, and by announcing under what conditions it would pursue disarmament further.

 To read the evidence, visit www.basicint.org/tridentcommission

“UNAs need to get the public to understand what the UN really is and to help push issues higher up the political agenda”

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, speaking at the launch of his autobiography, ‘Interventions: A Life in War and Peace’, in London on 4 October 2012

Clean energy

In July, UNA-UK wrote to the UK Secretary of State for Climate Change, Ed Davey, calling on him to ensure that the government’s new Energy Bill promotes energy generation that is clean and sustainable. Praising the UK’s leading role in adopting climate change legislation, UNA-UK urged the government to take bold steps on clean energy in accordance with the commitments it has made under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

 Visit www.una.org.uk for more information

London 2012

In the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games, UNA-UK undertook a host of activities that sought to promote the ideals of the United Nations and the Olympic movement. These included a Model UN event on the ‘Olympic Truce’ for schools, the production of a UN teaching pack, a letter-writing campaign, media articles and a major session at our UN Forum event in July.

Keen to do more than build awareness, UNA-UK also used the Games to raise three vital issues with the UK government: renewed efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the Syrian conflict; increased support for UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding programmes; and implementing fully the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

 Visit www.una.org.uk for information on all these activities, and to read about what our members and branches have been doing to promote the values of the Games



UN FORUM 2012: bringing the UN to the UK

Lord Malloch-Brown, former UN Deputy Secretary-General, and Sir Patrick Stewart, actor and UNA-UK patron, were among the high-level speakers at UNA-UK’s sold-out UN Forum event on 14 July 2012.

With over 1,000 people registered to attend, the event – the biggest of its kind in the UK – was a powerful demonstration of support for the work and mission of the United Nations. The day’s discussions generated awareness of the challenges facing the UN and ideas on how the Organisation can be equipped to address them effectively.

The conference opened with a debate on the ‘Olympic Truce’. Referring to shocking footage from Syria, Dame Margaret Anstee, the first woman to head a UN peacekeeping mission, and Sir Nicholas Young, chief executive of the British Red Cross, spoke about the practicalities of transforming the Truce from concept to reality on the ground. Wilfried Lemke, UN Special Adviser on Sport for Peace and Development, and Honey Thaljieh, founder of the first Palestinian women’s football team, shared their experiences of the profound impact sport can have in promoting reconciliation.

In his keynote speech, Lord Malloch-Brown gave the audience an overview of ‘where next for the UN’. He argued that the current global financial crisis is an opportunity to remake and strengthen the UN. Sir Patrick Stewart spoke movingly of his father’s experiences during the Second World War, saying that he referred to the UN as the best legacy of that era. He appealed to the audience to ensure that both the UN and UNA-UK “live long and prosper”.

The event also featured all-star panels on nuclear disarmament, population and human rights, a session on UN careers, and exclusive excerpts of ‘Zero Ten Twenty’ – a unique documentary project following the lives of children born during the 1992 UN Earth Summit.

Throughout the day, participants were asked to contribute their ideas on how to make the UN stronger, more credible and more effective. UNA-UK is building on these ideas in its UN Day 2012 campaign (see pages 14-15 in this magazine, and pages 13-16 in our ‘special issue’).

Films, photos and further information can be found at www.una.org.uk. A full report, including recommendations on the policy issues discussed, will be available shortly.

UNA-UK Members



UNA Church Stretton unites for peace and prosperity

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK's Chairman, is visiting Church Stretton from 25 until 26 October at the invitation of the local branch. He will be the principal speaker and guest at a forum, supported by UNA Central Region and aimed at the wider community, entitled "United for Peace and Prosperity".

The purpose of the forum is to create a plan for contributing to a peaceful Middle East, with particular attention being paid to the capacity of young people to contribute fresh perspectives, ideas and solutions to such long-standing issues. The event will also pay tribute to the impressive reputation of local community organisations for their practical concern for, and support of, humanitarian causes.

Partnership working

One UNA value that is cherished locally is partnership working. Initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) highlight a need to forge collaborative arrangements. Local community organisations with distinct aims related to the essence of any of the eight MDGs are important. Partnership working must be mutually beneficial, with equal benefits to all involved, and it is important to realise that relationships can often take years to grow in terms of trust and shared activities.

The Church Stretton community is well-blessed with such bodies working voluntarily for humanitarian causes. Opportunities to support a cause related to MDGs have been welcomed by the branch - what matters to us is to have successful outcomes, much more than who deserves the credit.

A local forum

Our October forum will therefore feature examples from four local voluntary organisations engaged in humanitarian activities, whose mottos resonate with UNA-UK: Fairtrade/Traidcraft, Rotary, Stretton Climate Care and, of course, UNA Church Stretton. At least a dozen other organisations are equally well-qualified to share their experiences and they have been invited to attend.



Picture from the 'Afghanistan Livelihood Project', which is supported by UNA Church Stretton and the wider community. Through the UN Refugee Agency, the project supports the retraining of returning Afghan refugees in poultry-raising and other trades © UNHCR

A unique perspective on peace will also be introduced by students with an international outlook. These students have participated in Model UN competitions, designed to enhance diplomacy skills in young people by seeking solutions to specific world problems. The students are from Concord College and North Staffordshire UNA Youth. They will be invited to offer ideas and solutions to prevailing circumstances in Middle Eastern countries.

So "United for Peace and Prosperity" will be a whole-community forum, hosted by the Town Mayor, Councillor Tom Beaumont, with 20 local voluntary organisations involved. Participants from UNA Central Region with an interest in the Middle East are also registered to attend. The event itself will take place at three local community centres: Silvester Horne

Institute for a supper and presentation; the Parish Centre for experience-sharing; and the Mayfair Community Centre for planning.

Peace and prosperity

Peace is more likely when different people with distinct ways of life share a common purpose. Prosperity may be realised when differences are harnessed as an asset channelled towards a common purpose and applied in an atmosphere of trust. Peace and prosperity are as important internationally as they are locally. The principles are the same but the application needs to suit the prevailing culture.

What could emerge when a recognised international statesman on diplomacy and the Middle East shares his views and interacts with a cross-section of people from recognised and established voluntary organisations? Can we make a difference? ●

Barrie Oxtoby, a Visiting Professor at the University of Chester, is Co-Chair of UNA Church Stretton. In 2011, he was presented with the UNA-UK Award for Distinguished Service by the UNA-UK Board of Directors

UNA-UK Young Professionals



Aldo Henriquez spoke to *New World* about life at the UN headquarters and as a London 2012 Games Maker

“How do I get a job at the UN?” is probably the question UNA-UK hears most often.

You worked for the UN Department of Public Information – how did you do it?

I have always been interested in international affairs. I studied political science in New Orleans and later moved to New York for an MA in culture and communication. Once there, it made sense to apply to the UN.

My language skills, as well as my diverse work portfolio – spanning human rights, AIDS prevention, and TV and radio administration – stood me in good stead. I was selected for a short contract to promote and distribute multimedia products in the lead-up to the Millennium Summit and launch of the Millennium Development Goals.

My three-month assignment led to a fulfilling career, spanning 10 years and enabling me to explore all aspects of external relations and public outreach: from procuring broadcast equipment for the World AIDS Conference to working alongside the UN Spokesperson in Cyprus during the Annan referendum for reunification; from media relations during the Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006 to co-ordinating award-winning UNTV news productions; from organising international student conferences with high-level speakers to putting together the UN’s flagship policy publication, the *UN Chronicle*.

What challenges did you face in communicating the UN’s work?

When I worked with the Spokesperson in Cyprus it was sometimes challenging to present a balance between the peacekeeping mission’s achievements and what still needed to be done. Because the UN’s work is far-reaching and complex, when you convey messages to the public you have to be able to explain which part of the UN you are referring to without drowning them in details.

How can we support the UN in this?

UNA-UK already provides a huge amount of support for the work of the UN. When

I volunteered during the UN Forum over the summer, I saw at first hand what an important partner UNA-UK was for the UN and how it filled in for the lack of an official UN Information Centre in London. You should build on already-established partnerships, look for strategic opportunities to collaborate, and make your voices heard from across the pond.

And UNA-UK members could contribute by conducting activities around international days and years, as well as by engaging with local schools. For UN Day one year, I volunteered as a UN4U speaker and was sent to Far Rockaway in Brooklyn, where I presented to over 300 high-school students. It was rewarding and served as good public speaking experience.

You recently had quite a change of scene – tell us about your latest role

I was selected to be a London 2012 Games Maker, working on media transport logistics at the International Broadcast Centre and the Main Press Centre in the Olympic Park. I was blown away by the British spirit of voluntarism. My own enthusiasm and sense of duty also took me by surprise whenever I wore the Games Maker uniform. I met some of the kindest and most interesting people from all over London, the UK and around the world.

It was an intense experience because the Olympic Park seemed to be a global epicentre and the teams of volunteers had to bond quickly in a short period of time.

One of the highlights was going to Beach Volleyball at Whitehall with the London Eye and Big Ben as a backdrop. Meeting Olympians was fun but I found the Paralympics more inspiring and eye-opening. Professionally my role gave me the opportunity to develop new skills. As a Team Leader I got to supervise highly qualified and experienced volunteers. As a reward, I got to add the world’s largest sports event to my list of international experiences. The part that has stayed with me the most, though, was taking in the atmosphere while walking through the Olympic Park.

How do you see the UN’s role in the Olympic Movement?

While not being overtly political, the 2012 Games were very successful at integrating UN values and priorities. This was the first time all 193 UN member states unanimously passed the General Assembly’s Olympic Truce Resolution. Gender equality, sustainability and development in depressed urban areas were a big part of the Games. A shared spotlight with the Paralympics raised awareness of integrating people with disabilities into daily life. Hopefully the UN and the Olympics will build on this and forge an even stronger Olympic Truce programme in the future.

Finally, what tips do you have for young professionals aspiring to work at the UN?

I would say keep your options open. The UN system is huge. Working at the headquarters in New York may be exciting but working in the field can be immensely gratifying. If you are really set on the Secretariat, then do your research. Talking to informed staff members is very effective. There are many options available. Find out what each one entails. The most rewarding UN careers combine assignments at headquarters with international field work. ●



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon takes part in the torch run for the London 2012 Games © UN Photo/ Eskinder Debebe

Freshers' fair 2012 - are you the next Secretary-General?



Olivia Williams of BPP University College gets into the 'freshers fair' spirit
© BPP UNA Youth

University freshers' fairs present new students with a host of clubs and societies to get involved with. From human rights to the environment, tennis to tiddlywinks, no matter what your interest, chances are a group dedicated to it exists - Cardiff University's intriguing "Custard Wrestling Society" is a good case in point. Ensuring that UNA Youth stands out amongst this dizzying array is a perennial challenge facing our university branches.

This year, UNA-UK created a campaign to help youth branches attract a record number of supporters: asking passersby to picture themselves, quite literally, as the next UN Secretary-General by posing in a cut-out poster. Once engaged, students were asked to begin their relationship with UNA-UK and their UNA Youth branch by completing a supporter postcard.

Future Secretaries-General of all stripes have posted their pictures on Twitter, Facebook and other sites, spreading the message that involvement in UNA Youth is a must for anyone interested in the United Nations (and lots of fun too).

Through this quirky stunt, UNA-UK sought to address, in a simple and engaging way, the pressing questions that potential

UNA Youth members ask themselves during freshers' week:

- How can I make the most of my time at university?
- Will I be able to engage with the big issues facing the world?
- How can I contribute to tackling these challenges?
- Which society will give my CV a real boost?
- What's the best way to meet others with a passion for global affairs?

Supporting students in developing their interests and careers is a top priority for UNA-UK. This is the largest generation of young people the world has ever known: half the global population is under 25 and this proportion is rising. Right now, the world is facing multiple challenges that need effective partnerships across borders, across sectors and across generations. We need the commitment of students and young people everywhere if we are to forge a sustainable future.

We hope that our freshers' fair campaign is the starting point for this engagement and we look forward to building on its success with a year of strong UNA Youth activity.

Welcome to UNA Youth 2012/13!

As the new UNA Youth President, I'm very excited about what 2012/13 has in store for us, for UNA-UK and for the United Nations. This year, Vice President Edward Sainsbury and I will be working closely with the UNA-UK team to ensure that our activities complement each other, and further our common goal: a safer, fairer and more sustainable world.

We are now in the process of co-opting people with relevant experience onto the Youth Council and have plans for a big event in February - more details soon! And UNA-UK has just released a fantastic youth campaign pack (see below).

With so much coming up, it's crucial that UNA-UK can communicate directly with as many students as possible, so make sure that you sign up to be a supporter of UNA-UK by visiting: www.una.org.uk/interest. Signing up is completely free and takes just a few seconds.

It's my passion to build on the great work of my predecessor Tyna Vayalilkollattu to make UNA Youth a strong advocate for the UN in universities throughout the UK.

Stephen Vanson
President, UNA Youth



NEW UNA YOUTH CAMPAIGN PACK

UNA-UK, in partnership with three UN agencies, has produced a campaign pack for UNA Youth. To find out more and access the pack, visit www.una.org.uk/youth

Interested in world affairs? Become a UNA-UK supporter

This month we celebrate United Nations Day, and millions of people around the world will take time to reflect on the aims of the Organisation and to celebrate the impact of its daily work.

UNA-UK is taking this opportunity to launch its new supporter programme, which gives everyone the chance to get closer to the UN, not just for one day, but throughout the year.

By becoming a UNA-UK supporter, you can:

- Engage with UN and UNA-UK news through our UN Matters e-briefings
- Participate in our local branches and youth branches
- Meet experts and likeminded people at UNA-UK events
- Discover different perspectives with the UK's most authoritative publication on the UN - New World online

It's completely free to join - just visit www.una.org.uk/interest or fill out one of the enclosed postcards.



UNA-UK

To find out more and to become a supporter, visit www.una.org.uk/interest

© UNA-UK



After the Spring: Prospects for the Arab World in 2013

This winter, the United Nations Association of the UK is launching an official publication covering the reconstruction and development of North Africa and the Middle East.

After the Spring: Prospects for the Arab World in 2013 is designed to promote and facilitate international engagement: it will ensure that international attention remains focused on the challenges that lie ahead and will act as a medium for those involved in the process to share their experiences and expertise.

The publication will provide comprehensive coverage of the transition countries and explore the common challenges. Contributors are drawn from the highest level participants and commentators, including:

- **Sir Jeremy Greenstock**, current Chairman of the UN Association of the UK and former British Ambassador to the UN
- **Robert Hormats**, US Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs
- **Riadh Bettaïeb**, Tunisian Minister of Investment and International Cooperation
- **Baroness Amos**, UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator



To find out how to receive a copy of the publication, or how to advertise in it, please contact claire.manuel@witanmedia.com

