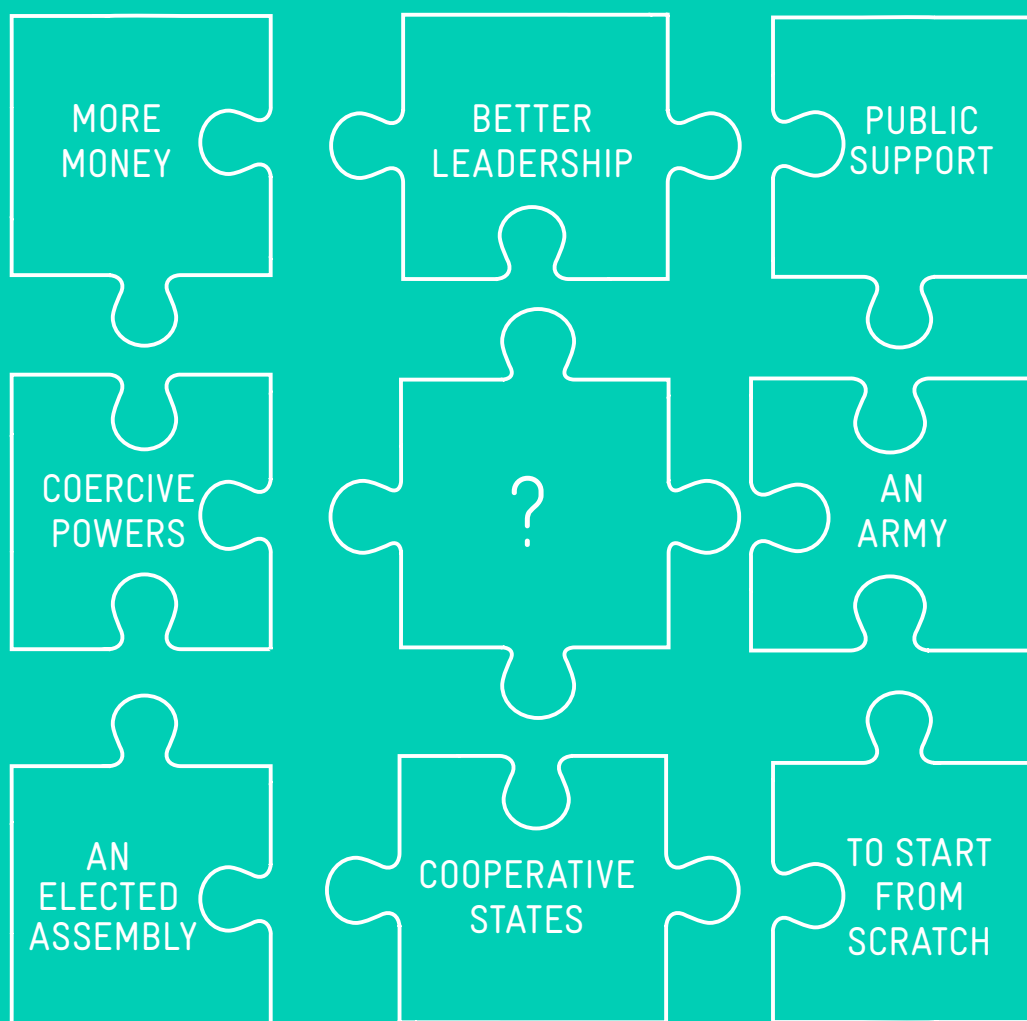
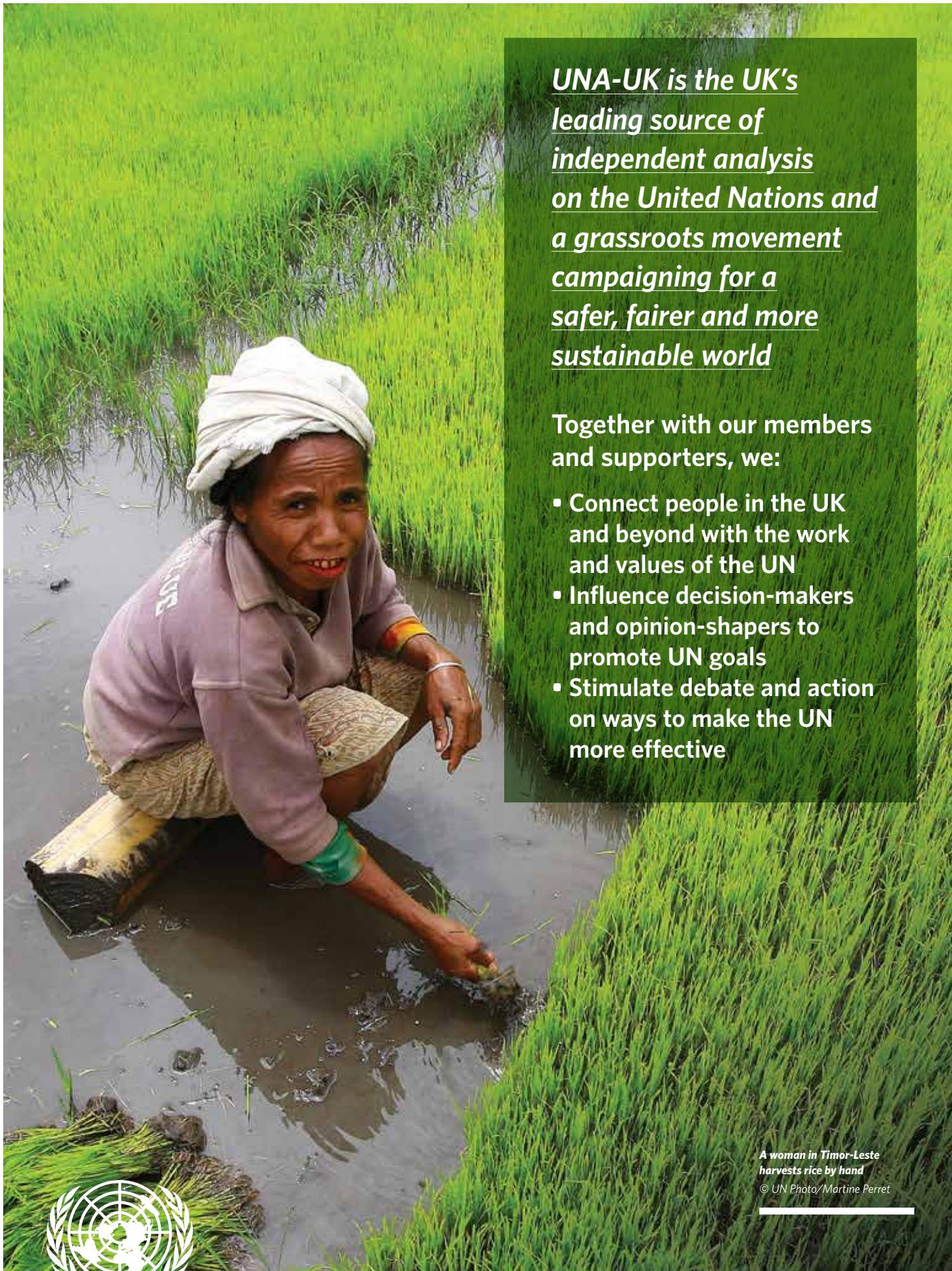


THE UN NEEDS...



WITH [H.E. Bernard Emié](#) on veto restraint / [David Hannay](#) on 10 years of reform / [Michelle Evans](#) on protecting civil society at the UN / [Thomas Nash](#) on future prospects for disarmament / [Vikas Nath](#) on the UN development system



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 woman in Timor-Leste harvests rice by hand
© UN Photo/Martine Perret



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New World

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New World online

UNA-UK has a dedicated New World mini-site featuring the print content and a host of web-exclusive articles. Included in this issue:

Relief and rehabilitation in the Himalayas
Sejuti Basu & Vaidehee Sachdev, Pragma

New pressure for Security Council reform: revolution or distraction?
Nora Gordon & Richard Gowan, Center for International Cooperation

Human security at the UN
Richard Jolly, Institute of Development Studies

UN Police – more women needed
Ann-Marie Orlor, former UN Police

The UN and the private sector – do such partnership work?
Mrinalini Singh, UNA-UK

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www.una.org.uk/magazine

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Contents



“The United Nations was never intended to be a utopian exercise. It was meant to be a collective security system that worked” 2004 report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change

4 Editorial
Hayley Richardson and **Jeremy Greenstock**

6 In brief
Global health news, a post-2015 update and more

8 Briefing
Choosing the next UN Secretary-General

10 Opinion
The case for veto restraint at the Security Council
H.E. Bernard Emié

11 Feature
Lord Hannay reflects on 10 years of UN reform

14 Talking points
Is the UN fit for purpose?
Adam LeBar & Mark Seddon

16 Opinion
Re-thinking the UN development system
Vikas Nath

18 Opinion
Defending civil society action at the UN
Michelle Evans

19 10
A UN reform wishlist

20 The UN & the UK
UNA-UK hosts Kofi Annan and Sir Mark Lyall Grant

22 Notices & correspondence
Including the Director's column

24 UNA-UK Members
The “Arab Spring” and the Responsibility to Protect
Paul Evans

25 Generation United Nations
The next generation of global citizens
Anne Breivik

26 The last word
Lobbying for disarmament
Thomas Nash

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Trial and error

Hayley Richardson on the UN's approach to reform

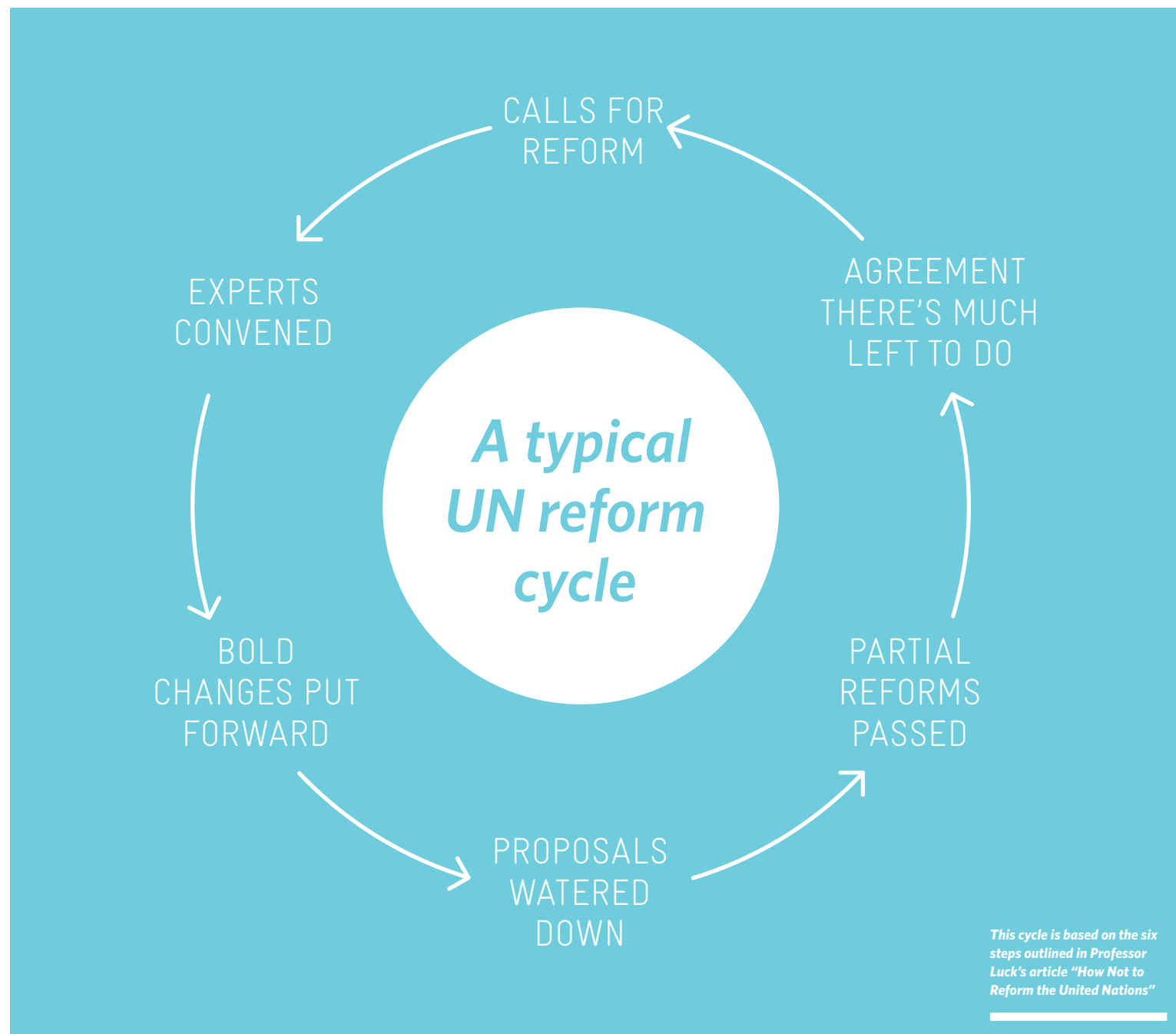
This issue of *New World* asks some fundamental questions of the UN. What is it for? Does it do its job well? Is it properly equipped? It's a good moment for some introspection. As Sir Jeremy sets out opposite, the next few years will see a number of changes, not only for the UK, but on the regional and global level too. Many of these changes will be subject to scrutiny at our UN Forum event on 28 June.

These questions are based on a tacit understanding – and basic tenet of UNA-UK's mission – that a strong, credible and effective United Nations is essential in what can at times seem an unfair and unstable world. Where things get complicated, however, is agreeing exactly *how* to make the UN work better.

Over the past seven decades, the Organization has undergone an extensive programme of trial and error, attempting both radical reform and minor adaptations. For followers of international relations, it is an exercise that has provided some fruitful lessons.

The most notable effort of recent years began under the tenure of Kofi Annan with his High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. Formed to identify major challenges to international peace and security, and to make recommendations on how to tackle them, the panel's report remains highly relevant 10 years on. Indeed, in an interview on pages 11–13, panel member and former UNA-UK Chairman David Hannay reflects not only on the relative success of the proposals that were implemented, but also on the substantial work still left to be done.

It was with this exercise in mind that UN expert Professor Ed Luck wrote his starkly titled article, "How Not to Reform the United Nations", in 2005. He considered the panel to be emblematic of the UN's approach to reform, "following recurring patterns and producing largely predictable results". A simplified version of this pattern is presented on these pages – its six-step cycle will be familiar to UN watchers.



The main thrust of the article is that while a package of institutional reforms can undoubtedly produce some good ideas, its impact will always be limited. As an intergovernmental body made up of 193 member states, protecting 193 interpretations of national interest, the UN has, as Luck observes, an "intrinsically political character". Its most intractable problems are therefore political.

The UN has an "intrinsically political character"

For example, for many the crisis in Syria, and the Security Council's inability to address it adequately, overrides all other concerns. As Adam LeBar argues in our Talking Points feature (pages 14–15),

without addressing this issue, all other UN commitments ring hollow. Would Security Council enlargement resolve the impasse? Likely not. Would veto reform? Maybe. However, achieving the latter would be no mean feat, as French Ambassador Bernard Emié acknowledges in his article on page 10.

And so we arrive at what is perhaps an uncomfortable truth. As David Hannay suggests, while one part of the UN is seemingly broken beyond repair, "it is the rest of the UN system which has to mitigate the appalling consequences".

At a time when those consequences may transcend borders – with conflicts drawing in neighbouring states, domino effect financial crises and changing weather patterns – deciding how best to shore up the UN's defences is surely in the interest of everyone. ●

Get in touch

UNA-UK welcomes your thoughts and comments on this issue of *New World*, or your suggestions for future issues.

You can email the editor, Hayley Richardson, at richardson@una.org.uk, tweet us @UNAUK or write to UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

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



The UK's role in a well-ordered world

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK Chairman, on the importance of investing in our global institutions

UN Forum, taking place on Saturday 28 June 2014, launches a year – running up to the May 2015 general election – of UNA-UK focus on the issues that matter to the UK, the UN and a healthy international system. The backcloth is a world in which UK impact continues to fade and a UN which seems to be failing the test of effective reform.

I hope UN Forum will bring out some hard truths, because our country is in potentially troubled waters. Only a brave gambler would bet on the UK coming out stronger, more cohesive and economically more competitive from the series of events coming up: the Scottish referendum, the election campaigns with their populist appeals, the sustaining of the economic recovery and the possible EU referendum in 2017 or 2018.

Yet we have strengths as a nation. Our combination of hard and soft power gives us some effective instruments: we have important international allies; and the economy, though still poorly structured, is showing some vigour again. The problem lies in how we invest in and develop these assets.

One of UNA-UK's aims is to promote better UK performance in a fair and well-ordered world. We contributed to parliament's examination of "Soft Power and the UK's Influence" and to various studies around the renewal of Trident. We have consistently pressed the government to uphold human rights standards and to play a lead role in debates on a successor to the Millennium Development Goals. We will continue to push for greater understanding of the need for an effective UN, which younger people seem to realise more readily than their elders (outside UNA-UK's membership).

The general trend, however, towards polarised politics and selfish economics is worrying. Growing inequality is currently a hot topic, in light of the arguments showing how difficult it is to address the accumulation of capital by the very richest. UNA-UK has been working hard

to establish the Responsibility to Protect as a principle which serves the strategic interest of states: this could and should be extended to the responsibility to tackle other pressures that pull societies apart, including the economic ones.

The single most problematic factor in implementing such norms is governments' attachment to state sovereignty, which grows stronger with each turn of the screw of political and cultural independence. Brian Urquhart observed 10 years ago that "the UN is the last formidable bastion of sacrosanct state authority". But the bastion has to be maintained to be useful. The health and effectiveness of global institutions are not being invested in with enough care, despite the obvious benefits of international solutions to shared problems.

One of UNA-UK's aims is to promote better UK performance in a fair and well-ordered world

Ironically, the threat to state sovereignty, of the kind that matters most to leaders in power, is being challenged less by constraints imposed by international institutions (which most member states have strongly resisted) than by a failure of governments to satisfy their own populations. The provision of both physical security and decent living standards is a duty that serves those in power because they cannot in the modern age do without popular support. Caring for the effectiveness of the UN across the full range of its activities is a concomitant of that duty, because the Organization represents and delivers those standards when properly served by its member states.

UNA-UK and its membership are confident that we are capable of getting our global institutions right. Putting the detail into that objective is what this issue of *New World* and UN Forum will both be all about. ●

● **Solution for Syria remains doubtful**

The world's hopes for a negotiated end to Syria's civil war were dealt a blow last month as Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN and Arab League's Joint Special Envoy to the country, resigned from his position. Since he took over the role from Kofi Annan in August 2012 the Syrian conflict has significantly worsened, with the number of refugees registered during this period increasing from 200,000 to 2.7 million.

Thanking Mr Brahimi for his efforts, particularly in organising the Geneva Conference earlier this year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: "I regret that the parties, and especially the government, have proven so reluctant to take advantage of that opportunity to end the country's profound misery".

A week later the UN Security Council met to vote on a resolution that would refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Despite the compelling findings of the UN's Commission of Inquiry on alleged human rights abuses in Syria, and overwhelming international support for the referral, the resolution was vetoed by China and Russia. All 13 other Security Council members voted in favour.

● **ICC examines claims of Iraq abuses**

Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), has decided to reopen a preliminary examination of allegations arising from the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which had previously been concluded in 2006. In light of new information submitted in January, the Prosecutor will specifically consider claims that UK forces committed war crimes involving systematic detainee abuse between 2003 and 2008.

The preliminary examination reviews the allegations, applying criteria set down in the Rome Statute, such as whether the ICC has jurisdiction in the case and if the state in question has sought to resolve the dispute itself. If the criteria are judged to have been met, the case could proceed to a formal investigation.



Gloves and boots used by medical staff dry in the sun at a centre for victims of the Ebola virus in Guinea. According to the World Health Organization, over 200 people have died since the beginning of the outbreak
© SEYLOU/AFP/Getty Images

“It’s not a disease. It’s not a dictator or a regime. It’s not a war. It’s not a weapon. It’s not an act of terrorism. I’m talking about the practice of open defecation”

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson talks frankly about the issue of poor sanitation, which costs the global economy around \$260bn annually

● **Successful end in Sierra Leone**

In March the UN announced the closure of its Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, 15 years after it was established. The UN Country Team, which consists of 19 development funds, programmes and agencies, will take on its residual duties, such as supporting the ongoing constitutional review process.

UNA-UK Chairman Sir Jeremy Greenstock served as UK representative on the Security Council during the final years of Sierra Leone's civil war and headed a delegation to the country in 2000. Commenting on the closure of the UN office, he said: "It is marvellous to see Sierra Leone moving to a new stage in its post-conflict development. This is a people of tremendous character and resilience, whom we all want to see progress to a stable period of peace and prosperity".

● **Milestone for UN peacekeeping**

The UN has appointed its first ever female commander of a United Nations peacekeeping force. Major General Kristin Lund of Norway, whose 34 years of experience includes service with the UN's missions in Lebanon and the Former Yugoslavia, will take the helm in Cyprus, where the top UN official is also a woman.

Editors note: Turn to page 20 to see how UNA-UK celebrated the International Day of UN Peacekeepers last month and page 23 for details on the Association's new one-year programme on increasing UK support for UN peacekeeping.

● **Post-2015 goals take shape**

The work to decide what will replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire next year continues apace at the UN. The Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals, an intergovernmental body established at the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, has issued a "zero draft" of its proposed goals and targets ahead of final deliberative sessions in June and July.

The draft includes 17 focus areas covering issues that range from tackling extreme poverty to the creation of effective institutions to sustainable cities. The OWG is due to submit its final report at the opening of the next General Assembly session in September.

● **UN calls for calm in Ukraine**

A relatively peaceful presidential election was held in Ukraine in May but the east of the country has also since been the scene of heavy fighting between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels. As tensions rise the UN has called for de-escalation measures.

Ban Ki-moon met with both interim Ukrainian President Oleksandr Turchynov and Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss the crisis, while the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has published the findings of a human rights monitoring mission to Ukraine it conducted in April.

● **Good and bad health news**

The World Health Organization has published its annual snapshot of the state of global public health. It reported a number of positive developments: since 2000, measles deaths worldwide have reduced by almost 80 per cent; the average global life expectancy is six years longer than it was in 1990; and since 2000, the under-five mortality rate fell from 75 to 48 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The report does, however, include some stark warnings. Despite modest gains, a number of the health-related MDG targets, such as reducing maternal deaths and child mortality, are considered unlikely to be met by 2015.

● **UN holds sustainable energy forum**

The UN has held its first annual Sustainable Energy for All forum, attended by over 1,000 participants from government, business and civil society groups. The forum marked the start of a UN Decade on this issue, with a focus in the first two years on energy for women and children's health.

The Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative was launched in 2011 with the aim of ensuring universal access to modern energy services, improving energy efficiency and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030. The annual forum will assess the commitments and progress made towards these targets.

There are currently 1.3 billion people worldwide who lack access to electricity and 2.6 billion who use traditional fuels for cooking and heating, the smoke from which is often hazardous to health.

100 nations with less than **five per cent** of the world population



make up **52 per cent** of member states in the UN General Assembly



Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Choosing the world's CEO

The post of UN Secretary-General has been called the world's most impossible job. It is also one of the most important. Surely more than five countries should have a say in the process?

As the UN's chief executive officer, the Secretary-General plays a crucial role in global affairs, driving forward the Organization's agenda and galvanising states to act in the interest of the world's citizens. He – and until now it has always been a he – works with 193 governments, leads over 40,000 staff and oversees 30 funds, programmes and agencies.

Since its founding in 1945, the UN, and with it the Secretary-General's role, have changed dramatically. But the selection process for the postholder has remained largely unaltered, meaning that today, it appears hopelessly outdated, opaque and out of step with modern hiring practices as well as the UN's own values.

There is no formal recruitment timetable or job description and candidates are not vetted. Only the Security Council has a real say in the process. It endorses a candidate

and then it is left for the rest of the UN's membership to rubber-stamp that decision.

If it is not reformed, this approach risks damaging the legitimacy of the Secretary-General role and public perceptions of the UN. Crucially, it cannot be relied upon to select the best candidate, outstanding former post-holders notwithstanding.

As this issue of *New World* makes clear, UN reform takes time, especially when amendment to the Charter, the Organization's founding document, is required. However, most of the current rules for appointing the Secretary-General are

customary or have their roots in decisions by the General Assembly, which states can choose to amend.

In order to ensure the ground is ready in time for the appointment of the next Secretary-General in late 2016, UNA-UK is calling for the debate on amending the rules to begin immediately. States should start putting forward concrete proposals for improvement, with a view to agreeing a

CHARTER PROVISIONS: MUST-DOS

1



To be nominated, a candidate must receive at least **9** affirmative votes in the Security Council (SC), with no veto by a permanent member (China, France, Russia, UK and the US – the P5)

2


The SC forwards its recommendation to the General Assembly (GA)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS: WILL-DOS

1

The SC should put forward just one candidate to the GA

2




The GA should make its decision through a simple majority vote

3

The first-term limit for the postholder is **5 YEARS** with the option of a further five

4

Due regard should be given to "regional rotation" and "gender equality"



INFORMAL PRACTICES: HAVE-ALWAYS-DONES

1

Nationals from the P5 are not nominated for the role, with candidates overwhelmingly from small or middle-ranking powers

2

Since 1961 there have not been two successive postholders from the same geographic region




3



Postholders generally speak English and French, the two working languages of the UN Secretariat

4

The original term limits have been maintained



Checklist for a better appointment process

 **Quality**

- A formal job description and selection criteria should be published
- The position should be advertised widely and nominations invited from parliaments and civil society, as well as states
- Shortlisted candidates should be vetted

 **Inclusivity**

- The Security Council should present more than one candidate to the General Assembly so that the wider UN membership has real choice
- Candidates should make public presentations and hold debates in the General Assembly ahead of the appointment decision

 **Transparency**

- A clear timetable and process should be adopted and published, with regular updates and opportunities for public involvement
- The shortlist of candidates should be published in good time
- Shortlisted candidates should all release manifestos

 **Equality**

- Qualified female and male candidates should be included in equal numbers – a practice already in place for other senior UN appointments
- Country of origin should not be a bar – qualified candidates from all regions should be encouraged to stand

 **Accountability**

- Candidates and member states should pledge to refrain from making promises regarding other senior UN appointments
- The General Assembly should consider the idea of a single, potentially longer, term for the post, to reduce re-election campaigning

YOU

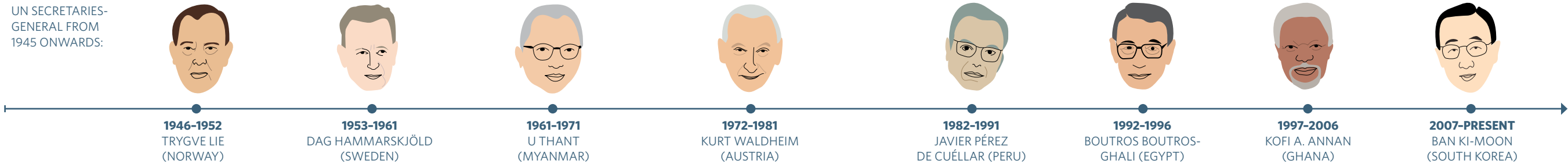
There is no shortage of reform proposals nor examples of best practice, including from within the UN itself. States have recognised the need for change. Public pressure is essential for words to become actions, and for governments to realise the urgency of the situation

process and timetable in 2015. This would leave time for meaningful engagement, and also have symbolic value, as a signal reform to mark the UN's 70th anniversary.

Global cooperation is needed more than ever. From climate change to terrorism to cyber-security, the problems facing the world transcend national borders. An effective Secretary-General can provide leadership, stimulate action on the solutions needed and forge partnerships between diverse constituencies.

The extent to which he or she can do so ultimately depends on the support of states. A more inclusive approach whereby all UN member states have the opportunity to provide real input would help to build the groundwork for this. Meanwhile, public engagement and confidence in the process, would go some way to reconnecting ordinary people with the promise of the UN, and building belief in a Secretary-General who can truly represent their hopes and concerns.

UN SECRETARIES-GENERAL FROM 1945 ONWARDS:



Who's next?





His Excellency Bernard Emié *on the need for veto restraint* *at the UN Security Council*

On 22 May, the resolution sponsored by France to authorise the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court came up against vetoes from Russia and China, despite the public support of 65 states, over 100 non-governmental organisations and votes in favour from all 13 other Security Council members.

Yet we are witnessing in Syria the gravest humanitarian tragedy since the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius put it cogently: “The Security Council’s paralysis in the face of the Syria crisis, with its dramatic human consequences, cannot be accepted by the world’s conscience. It undermines the credibility of our collective security system.”

The French initiative of adopting a code of conduct to govern the use of the veto, promoted by President François Hollande to the UN General Assembly in September 2013, is therefore more relevant than ever.

The code of conduct would consist of a voluntary, collective agreement by the five permanent members (P5) to refrain from using the veto in situations of mass atrocities. It would be applied when large-scale crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes are committed. We are not the first to have proposed such an initiative. This is also what the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change suggested in 2004 in its recommendations on Security Council reform (see next page).

The criteria for making this self-restraint possible have yet to be specified by the P5 themselves. For example, the code of conduct could be activated as soon as a situation is brought to the Security Council’s attention by the Secretary-General, either on his or her own initiative or following up a request by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights or from 50 member states.

Many people have been surprised by what they have interpreted as a sort of French “sabotage” of the Security Council. Let us be clear, for France, the veto is not a privilege or even a right. It

reflects the compromise reached to ensure the permanent members would participate in collective security. This prerogative involves obligations. Conversely, its abuse undermines the foundations of the 1945 pact accepted by all through the UN Charter.

The British prime minister, Clement Attlee, recalled this about the drafting of the Charter in 1945: “At San Francisco we agreed to the creation of the veto, but I am quite certain that we all regarded this as something to be used only in the last resort, in extreme cases where the five Great Powers might be involved in conflict. We never perceived it as a device to be used constantly whenever a particular power was not in full agreement with the others.”

In promoting this proposal, we are acting in the spirit of the Charter, guided by the imperative of the Responsibility to Protect. By this same logic, France is, along with the United Kingdom, the permanent member most clearly committed to broadening the Council.

For France – but no doubt for the UK as well – the code of conduct’s application would simply reflect an existing situation. Neither the UK nor France has used the veto since 1989. Consequently, we hope to rally our British friends to our

initiative, because together we have been behind over half the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and are the first to have protested against its recurrent deadlocks.

The current French initiative has already received a great deal of support. We shall be organising a ministerial meeting on the issue on the sidelines of the next General Assembly in September and will continue our work with a view to the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in 2015.

France will thus go on discussing this with the other permanent members and holding broad consultations with other UN member states and civil society, whose role is essential.

We do not underestimate the difficulty of the task. But as President John F. Kennedy once recalled in an anecdote about France’s Marshal Lyautey: “Marshall Lyautey once asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener objected that the tree was slow-growing and would not reach maturity for 100 years. The marshal replied: ‘In that case, there is no time to lose; plant it this afternoon!’” ●

His Excellency Bernard Emié is the Ambassador of France to the UK



French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius addresses the Security Council during a debate on Syria
© UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras



A more secure world?

A decade on from the seminal report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, New World editor Hayley Richardson quizzes panel member and former UNA-UK Chairman David Hannay on his experience of forging UN reform

Convened in 2003 by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change tasked 16 eminent persons from around the globe with assessing a diverse range of challenges to international peace and security. The panel’s report, “A More Secure World: our Shared Responsibility”, formed the basis of the subsequent 2005 World Summit, crowning one of the UN’s most significant reform initiatives.

Why was the panel convened in 2003?

This took place at a time when, in the immediate aftermath of the invasion of Iraq without a Security Council mandate, the UN’s reputation was at its absolute lowest. This led to Kofi Annan declaring that the UN was at a fork in the road – we could either carry on business as usual and the UN becoming increasingly irrelevant or we could take a really careful look at how to make the UN more effective.

That was the challenge and no one on the panel had a difference of view about that. Everyone agreed that there were massive global challenges out there that couldn’t possibly be solved by individual countries alone. There was a lot of common ground on what needed to be done.

Your mandate didn’t explicitly include a consideration of UN reform. Why was that?

That was a wise move, I think, by Annan. The word “reform” had become grossly devalued over the years: every single idea put forward at the UN was always announced as a major reform. I think he also felt that had the request been made for reform proposals they would probably have been discounted before they arrived. Having said that, there was a degree of smoke and mirrors because of course reform was what we were trying to do.



A member of the UN’s Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes part in an operation against rebel militia
© UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti

The panel's report included 101 proposals for action. Which of these did you deem most urgent?

I don't think anybody's ever ranked the proposals in any order of priority. It's always a dangerous thing to do at the UN because people simply drop all the lower priority ones and proceed to give the death of a thousand cuts to the higher priority ones. Moreover, the recommendations weren't just disparate ideas; they hung together and were related to each other. For example, the proposals we made regarding Security Council authorisation of the use of force were highly relevant to the circumstances in which military intervention under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) might be approved.

Was there anything you wanted to include but couldn't get in?

There were several things we didn't include, which one or other members of the panel wanted, such as the idea of a UN standing military force, championed by Satish Nambiar, the Indian General who had commanded the UN force in Bosnia. A very small minority also wanted to pull back into the UN all the economic work which had left with the establishment of the International Financial Institutions. I think our feeling was that this was just not in the realm of the possible.

Security Council reform remains as elusive as ever. Rather than wholesale reform, is the gradual adaption of the day-to-day working methods the right way to advance this issue?

I think that you can make progress on working methods while making progress on the larger issue. The proposals we made for Council enlargement had a rather tortuous history. Annan began by hoping we would produce a single proposal on which he would put all his weight, but then, when it was leaked that we were likely to propose the idea of semi-permanent members – members with four-year renewable terms – which could act as a stepping stone to wider reform, he was pressed to include the option of new permanent members also. And so Annan asked us to produce two proposals, the second of which was for six new permanent members without the veto.

The subject was probably doomed anyway, but it certainly was more doomed when there were two proposals on the table instead of one. And I have to say that I think the chances of making progress on that now are quite a bit less than they were in 2005, so it was an opportunity missed. Most important were the successful efforts we made to ensure that if the proposals didn't succeed, they didn't take the rest of the recommendations down with them.

We also included in our recommendations that in cases of genocide or massive abuses of humanitarian law, there should be a kind of gentleman's agreement among the permanent members not to use the veto. I'm very glad the French have now resuscitated the proposal (see page 10), and I very much hope that the British Government will support it.

Of the recommendations taken forward at the subsequent World Summit in 2005, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the endorsement of R2P were undoubtedly the most high-profile outcomes. Which in your opinion has made the biggest difference since?

They've all had their successes. The Peacebuilding Commission remains under-utilised and under-resourced and I believe that the UN needs to see how it could turn it into a more effective instrument, in particular in post-conflict peacebuilding.

R2P was the most surprising decision taken by the 2005 World Summit. I wouldn't myself have given it much chance of getting through but it was unanimously endorsed. It is a work in progress – it needs above all to emphasise what more can be done in terms of prevention.

The Human Rights Council has been a modest success. Its Universal Periodic Review mechanism – under which every member state now has its human rights record assessed – has a lot of potential so long as it doesn't become a purely routine operation. But it remains still one of the weakest parts of the UN with no enforcement powers.

How did your other proposals fare?

There were quite a lot of recommendations which weren't taken forward at the time but which have subsequently been given effect (I like to think partly because our report recommended them). There was the call for a G20 group of developed and developing countries which has now belatedly come into being. There were a set of proposals for the UN to strengthen its approach to regional peacekeeping, which has since been carried out very effectively with the UN and the African Union now working together in much greater harmony in places like Somalia. There were proposals for smart sanctions, which are now more widely used. And there were calls for the conventional arms register to be made more effective; and now we have the Arms Trade Treaty which is a splendid initiative.

On the minus side there are a whole string of things: we wanted to get rid of the obsolete Military Staff Committee, the Trusteeship Council and references to "enemy states" in the UN Charter; our proposals for guidelines on the Security Council's authorisation of the use of force were given short shrift; and then the whole set of recommendations on weapons of mass destruction were simply dropped in the wastepaper basket and it's not yet been possible to fish them out again.

You've spoken of the difficulties the UN faced in 2005. In what ways do you think the environment for action has changed since then?

The Security Council I'm afraid is not in a good place at the moment. We've had the really miserable experience over Syria, in which every attempt to engage the Security Council effectively, apart from on the issue of chemical weapons, has failed.

We've also got to recognise that in certain parts of the world we are confronted with quasi-Cold War conditions. When it comes to Russia's actions in the Ukraine, the UN can no more do anything now than at any time since 1945, and in the increasing tensions between China and Japan over conflicting claims in the South and East China Seas the same is true.

So in some parts of the world, but not everywhere, we're back again in a situation like we were before the end of the 1980s, when some things are simply not worth

bringing to the Security Council because you aren't going to get any results.

In your book, New World Disorder, you say that the real risk for the future of the UN is that it remains "both indispensable and relatively ineffective". Can you expand on that?

One of the interesting characteristics of the Security Council's lamentable failings over Syria is that it is the rest of the UN system which has to mitigate the appalling consequences of that blockage. Even when the Security Council is being prevented from working as it should, it is the UN's Refugee Agency, the World Health Organization, the Human Rights Council which are picking up the slack.

Finally, is it time for another panel to assess the next set of challenges for the UN?

There could be a case for another round of systemic reform in 10 or 15 years' time. But it would not be a

good thing to create another panel today – people get reform fatigue and it's quite difficult to carry the thing through to a success. There is also a paradox built into the UN, which is that when it most needs reform you are least likely to have the right conditions which enable you to put the reforms in place, and when the Organization isn't in crisis, nobody thinks it needs reform.

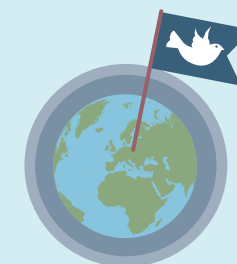
One area which does need addressing is the proliferation of state failures over the last 25 years which shows no signs of ceasing. After the end of the Cold War, state failure became the UN's business, but nobody has ever sat down and said this is something we're going to have to cope with for decades ahead and these are the sort of guidelines we're going to use to approach this in a systematic way. I've always identified not doing so as one of the big failings of the UN in the 1990s when the potential to make major changes was there. It remains that way to this day. ●

Where are we now? An update on three of the major outcomes of the 2005 World Summit



Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

- R2P has framed the international community's response to a number of crises, from Kenya in 2007 to Libya in 2011, and has been referenced in over 20 Security Council resolutions since 2006
- The UN now has a Special Adviser on R2P (at the Assistant Secretary-General level), who shares a common office with the Special Advisor on Genocide
- A number of member states have formed an informal, cross-regional Group of Friends committed to advancing R2P within the UN system, and over 30 have appointed a national R2P focal point (someone in government responsible for promoting the principle)
- However, the lack of an adequate response to crises in Syria, Sri Lanka and elsewhere has cast serious doubt over the entire concept
- Arguably, not enough attention has been paid to pillars one and two, which focus on preventative action, and debate over pillar three (military intervention) remains divisive



Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

- As an advisory subsidiary body of the Security Council, the PBC is made up of member states charged with providing much-needed coherence to the UN's peacebuilding work
- The PBC currently works on post-conflict recovery issues in six countries, some of which requested the PBC's assistance: Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone
- Due to the significant progress made, the Sierra Leone office will now be scaled back
- One of the PBC's focus countries, the Central African Republic, has badly deteriorated in recent months, and is now one of the UN's biggest humanitarian emergencies
- A key limitation is that the PBC's relationships with other relevant UN entities are weak and ill-defined: the Security Council's engagement has been inconsistent and there is a need for greater coordination with UN political missions and in-country teams



Human Rights Council (HRC)

- Since its establishment, the HRC has passed over 500 resolutions on a wide range of human rights issues, from sexual orientation to the protection of journalists
- Arguably the most significant achievement of the HRC has been its Universal Periodic Review mechanism, through which every single UN member state has had its human rights record assessed
- Commissions of Inquiry on Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have documented gross human rights violations and possible crimes against humanity – work that will be crucial to any potential future judicial proceedings
- The HRC struggles with the same issues as its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights: its membership includes states with poor rights records and its country-specific work, though growing, remains subject to selectivity
- Its resolutions, while carrying some diplomatic clout, are not binding and can therefore suffer from a lack of implementation and follow-up

Is the UN fit for purpose?

Adam LeBor and Mark Seddon
debate this fundamental question

Internally displaced people arrive at a camp in Jowhar, Somalia. The UN estimates that over 850,000 Somalis require urgent and life-saving assistance
© UN Photo/Tobin Jones



Adam LeBor is the author of Complicity with Evil: The United Nations in the Age of Modern Genocide. He is currently writing a series of thrillers set in and around the UN. The first volume, The Geneva Option, is out now.

● **AL:** The UN was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War to protect human rights and prevent genocide. It has failed to do so. During the 1990s, peacekeepers were present at the site of two genocides, in Rwanda and in Srebrenica, Bosnia, where the “blue helmets” failed to prevent mass slaughter. This happened for several reasons: the peacekeepers’ lack of political support in the Security Council; their weak and ambivalent mandates, but perhaps most of all, because of the UN’s then-obsession with neutrality and impartiality. The fear of being seen to take sides led to a grotesque failure of leadership at the highest reaches of the Secretariat. However, there are some signs that lessons have been learnt from those failures. Peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan have taken a more proactive and interventionist approach. There the UN flag means sanctuary. So the UN may be moving towards becoming fit for purpose.

Until there is drastic reform in the way the UN is structured, many of its stated commitments will seem empty

● **MS:** The UN was actually founded to “promote peace, security and economic development” and has accounted for itself pretty well in the intervening years. The spread of international conventions govern everything from chemical weapons to internationally binding commitments on aid spending and efforts to tackle climate change. For millions across the developing world, the UN is vitally important for their health and well-being. As you’ve said, the lessons

of Rwanda and Srebrenica have been well learned. In their aftermath, we have the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), an International Criminal Court and peacekeeping operations backed up by stronger mandates. More recently, opening up a UN camp to internally displaced people in South Sudan is estimated to have saved 80,000 lives; the citizens of Benghazi, Libya, were saved from a terrible fate through UN intervention and peace and reconciliation has been facilitated after dreadful violence in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. When member states enable the UN to act, it very amply lives up to the vision of its founders.

● **AL:** I don’t dispute that the UN has done valuable and important work in crises and disaster zones. There is no doubt that UN staff have saved and improved countless lives. And we can agree that the new, more muscular peacekeeping is a vast improvement. However the doctrine of R2P, that member states have a responsibility to prevent mass slaughter and genocide, has proved hollow: witness the continuing carnage in the Central African Republic. You also mention the international legal conventions on the use of chemical weapons. Syria, as is well known, has used chemical weapons against its own civilians, with hideous results. Yet Syria remains a member state of the UN in good standing, protected by its patron Russia, who can block any critical resolution on the Security Council. Until there is drastic reform in the way the UN is structured and operates, many of its stated commitments to human rights will seem empty.

● **MS:** The UN has now succeeded in destroying upwards of 93 per cent of Syria’s chemical weapons,

has provided humanitarian aid and stands prepared to do a great deal more if the warring sides allow it to do so. It’s also set to despatch 16,000 peacekeepers to the Central African Republic. But the UN and its agencies are active in so many different, life-saving ways it is often easy to forget how important it is – especially to people in the developing world. It promotes maternal health, saving the lives of 30 million women a year; it vaccinates 58 per cent of the world’s children, saving 2.5 million children a year; it assists over 34 million refugees and people fleeing war, famine or persecution and it fights poverty, helping 370 million rural poor achieve better lives. From sexual health, to fighting sexual discrimination, from campaigning against female genital mutilation and for a moratorium on the death penalty, here is the UN at work, showing a very real commitment to human rights. Just where would we be without the UN agencies that make such a great difference?

● **AL:** Yes, the UN does important work saving and improving lives. The parts of the Organization dealing with health, refugees and humanitarian crises are indeed vital. However, the UN was primarily founded to work for international peace and security. I must return once again to Syria, which has faced very few consequences despite having gassed and slaughtered its own civilians. This is the clearest illustration that the Security Council at least is no longer fit for purpose. It is now 2014, almost 70 years since the UN was established at the end of the Second World War. It is absurd that the five victors of that war – Britain, the US, Russia, France and China – retain the veto and permanent membership at the Council. This set-up ignores the reality of the world in the 21st century. Why is there no permanent

member of the Security Council from Africa, South America or other parts of Asia? India, Brazil and South Africa, for example, would all be logical candidates. Until this is remedied and the structure of the Council is reformed, the UN will continue to lack both credibility and power.

At a time of enormous change, environmentally, economically and politically, the UN is arguably needed now more than ever before

● **MS:** Just because at least three members of the Security Council are supplying weaponry to different sides in the Syria conflict – and in doing so ignoring the pleas of the UN Secretary-General – does not invalidate the organisation of which they are all members. The United Nations’ Geneva 2 peace process has offered the best way forward so far, but has stalled because neither side is prepared to give any ground. Your question about membership of the Security Council is therefore probably better addressed to the governments of France and Britain rather than the United Nations. There is no lack of appetite for reform within the Organization – just the opposite under the current Secretary-General. From Haiti to the Golan Heights to South Sudan, the UN is working to prevent conflict and help rebuild nations. And at a time of enormous change – environmentally, economically and politically – the UN is arguably needed now more than ever before. As has been said before, if the world didn’t have the United Nations it would have to invent it. ●



Mark Seddon is Speechwriter for the UN Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General. Prior to this, he had a journalistic career spanning 20 years, including as the first UN correspondent for Al Jazeera.



Vikas Nath on remaining relevant and the UN's new development challenges

The United Nations is a uniquely universal organisation with unparalleled convening power. It has used this strength to draw new issues into the multilateral sphere and to push challenges such as sustainable development, gender equality and climate change to the top of the global political agenda.

It has also brought new ideas, solutions and delivery mechanisms to tackle development, most notably through its Human Development Index, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 framework that will succeed them. But the link between internationally agreed goals and actual outcomes remains weak.

At a time when many development challenges are, as former Secretary-General Kofi Annan rightly identified, “problems without passports”, requiring multilateral action, there has been a gradual fragmentation of the UN development system’s functions and capabilities. More than 30 UN agencies engage in development activities, each with their own governance, financing and overlapping agendas.

This has led to incoherence between the UN’s agenda-setting function and its delivery mechanisms. As a result, the UN is often rendered unable to provide a well-coordinated lead, and ends up lagging behind more nimble institutions.

A 2014 survey of more than 3,000 people from around the world, conducted by the Future United Nations Development System Project, found that the UN faces stiff competition from non-UN agencies in its core areas of technical assistance, research and analysis; setting global technical standards; and the global development of conventions and norms.

Furthermore, as resources become more constrained, each UN agency is under pressure to raise external funds for its survival. Short-term financing takes precedence over long-term strategy, and accountability, undermining independence and relevance – the very attributes that make the UN strong.

In the past, the standard UN response to calls for adaptation or reform has been

to set up a new institution. Too often, this has only served to deepen incoherence – a mistake that the UN is now trying to correct through its Delivering as One initiative. Launched in 2007, it seeks to improve coherency by establishing “One UN” at the country level, with a single leader, a single budget and, where appropriate, a single office.

But these actions are too little, too late. They focus narrowly on organisational efficiencies rather than making the UN’s work more relevant. Moreover, the challenges the Organization faces go far beyond those found at country level. While the UN may be able to handle humanitarian crises at the national level, that does not mean it can effectively handle global issues, such as financial downturns or climate change, which are leading to widespread unemployment, migration and social unrest.

Two factors work against the UN’s current approach. First, many countries no longer look to the Organization for aid and technical assistance. New alternatives have emerged within the private sector and civil society organisations, which have far greater resources and agility with which to deliver assistance. Second, as more countries achieve middle-income status, their aspirations are changing. They want to safeguard and further their interests in agriculture, industrialisation, technology transfer, trade, the environment and finance – areas in which the UN can struggle to have an influence.

While UN reform is difficult to achieve, the Organization can remake itself by transforming its development mandate into an integrated, purely policy-setting role rather than reducing itself to one of many development contractors. This would be a huge transition – a shift from the UN “delivering as one” to governments doing so – but it would enable the Organization to leverage its convening power and global legitimacy to influence the international development agenda.

Such a shift would change the criteria for evaluating the success of the UN’s development system from looking at delivery on the ground to measuring



New World paid homage to the UN Development Programme's influential Human Development Reports with its Summer 2012 cover

its role in formulating agendas, shaping global opinion, upholding international conventions, precipitating action and contributing to global governance. The UN embarked on this path with the MDGs, and looks set to continue along it through the post-2015 framework. It remains to be seen if the UN can realise its strengths and build up the momentum and capacities required to take up this leadership role. If not, there is a danger it will fragment and cede its development role to other institutions. ●

Vikas Nath is Associate Director at the Future United Nations Development System Project. His work cuts across UN, environment and social entrepreneurship issues, see www.vikasnath.com for more information

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Welcome or not? **Michelle Evans** calls on the UN to enhance protections for human rights defenders

Despite knowing the huge risks human rights defenders face in their work, the news still came as a shock to our global community. On 14 March, Cao Shunli, a prominent human rights lawyer, died in hospital after being detained by the Chinese authorities for several months. She was arrested while travelling to participate in a training session on the UN human rights system set up by the International Service for Human Rights. Cao's supposed "crime" was having campaigned for greater civil society participation in the UN Human Rights Council's review of China's human rights record.

Civil society has always played a crucial role at the UN, from those present at the Organization's founding conference in San Francisco to the 10,000 NGO representatives at Rio+20 in 2012. Human rights defenders have made an exceptional contribution, shaping the international system of protection we recognise today, exposing state misconduct and insisting on accountability.

In recent years, human rights defenders have used the UN system to shine spotlights on grave situations in Syria, Belarus, Iran, Eritrea, Sri Lanka and North Korea, to name just a few, and have worked diligently to promote the universality of human rights in all UN fora, such as by defending women's rights against regressive forces.

Human rights defenders who engage with the UN face serious challenges. They and their families often endure intimidation, harassment, defamation, arrest, fabricated charges, loss of employment, forced relocation, and physical attacks, including torture and killings. They also encounter numerous laws and regulations that criminalise and restrict their work.

Cao Shunli paid the ultimate price for her work and beliefs, and her death represents one of the most egregious cases of reprisals being taken against human rights defenders cooperating with the UN. Scores of other examples of alleged reprisals are recorded in communications to UN experts and in an annual report



A still from a Human Rights Council webcast shows NGOs observing a minute's silence for Cao Shunli
© International Service for Human Rights

of the UN Secretary-General, some of which have even been committed on UN premises. Many more cases, however, go unreported.

Notwithstanding the growing recognition of the seriousness of these reprisals, the response of the international community often remains inadequate. Member states have yet to investigate many of the known cases. The General Assembly is in deadlock over a resolution requesting that the Secretary-General appoint a high-level, anti-reprisals focal point. And too frequently, members of the UN Committee on NGOs, the body that regulates civil society accreditation to and participation at the UN, continue to hinder and harass numerous human rights defenders by arbitrarily and discriminately blocking access.

Despite certain states' attempts to quell the growing influence and presence of human rights defenders, civil society in countries all over the world continues to promote and protect human rights for all. Indeed, the participation of civil society organisations is growing, both in terms of those inputting into the Human Rights Council's review of states' human rights records, and the number of human rights organisations applying for consultative status via the Committee on NGOs, despite the many barriers to entry.

Reprisals against human rights defenders are not only incompatible with the very rights these individuals are seeking to defend, but they also undermine the authority, credibility and independence of the UN system itself. It is time for the international community to stop equivocating and take concrete steps to protect the civil society activists who form the backbone of the UN system.

Among other measures, member states must appoint a UN focal point who can hold perpetrators to account for attacks against human rights defenders and end discriminatory procedures in UN accreditation processes.

The international community must enhance these protections or risk damaging a human rights system that has been carefully constructed over more than 60 years, which will, one hopes, last for many more. ●

Michelle Evans is the New York Manager and Advocacy Coordinator of the International Service for Human Rights, which supports human rights defenders and takes part in coalitions aimed at strengthening human rights systems

10

suggestions for the UN reform wishlist

New World decided to suspend reality for a moment and ask 10 academics and experts: if you could wave a magic wand, what would you invent (or reinvent) at the UN?

1 A mechanism should be created whereby those who fail to react to crimes against humanity or genocide – senior UN officials or member states alike – would be named and shamed on a list displayed in the lobby of the UN headquarters and publicised worldwide – Ban Ki-moon's new Rights up Front initiative made real.

Steve Crawshaw, Amnesty International



2 I'd take the states' representatives out of their New York headquarters once a year and take the General Assembly on the road like a travelling rock band. They should set up a big dialogue tent in a different part of the world each time and listen to ordinary people talk about their desires, problems and needs.

Zeinab Badawi, BBC broadcaster

3 While the final selection of the Secretary-General will always

be political, I would establish a selection process to ensure that all candidates have the requisite qualifications and experience, and limit the term of office to one period. I'd also introduce a common budget for the whole UN system.

Dame Margaret Anstee, former UN Under-Secretary-General

4 Five hundred UN partnership hub centres would be created – at least one in every country – with space and resources for collaborative uses of technology, bringing together young innovators from the private sector, civil society, academia and beyond, to craft innovative and dynamic solutions to pressing global problems.

Sam Daws, Project on UN Governance and Reform

5 I would reinvent the Security Council, banishing the veto power of the five permanent members and introducing a mechanism that would give the rotating presidency to the UN's humanitarian agencies so they could focus international attention on issues such as hunger, nutrition, education, health and human rights.

Gregory Barrow, World Food Programme

6 The creation of a UN Citizens' Council – which mirrors the Security Council (SC) but is composed of randomly chosen citizens from current SC member countries – would provide a much-needed global conscience and voice of legitimacy for the UN. The Citizens' Council would take non-binding decisions on issues of international peace and security based on first-best policies rather than powerful national interests.

Christine Cheng, King's College London



7 I'd persuade the UK government – along with France – to give a real boost to reform of the Security Council by acknowledging that it is a complete anachronism for either of them to be one of five permanent members with a veto, and to commit never to use or threaten to use the veto pending full reform.

Ian Martin, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General

8 To increase public scrutiny of states' performance at the UN, the public should be able to signal their approval (or disapproval) of speeches, statements and votes by state delegates, with the results screened live on UN TV (in the same way approval graphs are displayed during US presidential debates).

Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK

9 I'd get every UN member state to submit an annual report providing a comprehensive explanation of their foreign affairs, defence and aid budgets in terms of their contribution to global peace, justice and security, with independent critical audits published alongside.

Paul Ingram, BASIC

10 I'd reinvent the idealism and fervour of staff in the initial post-war years. We sorely miss the commitment, dedication and integrity of the Brian Urquharts and Margaret Anstees of those days.

Thomas Weiss, Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies

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


UNA-UK hosts Kofi Annan at UN Forum preview event

On 20 May, UNA-UK hosted the launch of Kofi Annan's new book, *We the Peoples: A UN for the Twenty-First Century*, at King's College London. At the event, UNA-UK's Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, conducted a wide-ranging interview with Mr Annan, during which the former Secretary-General reflected on his time at the UN and on global developments since he left the role.

The latter included his experiences as a mediator during the 2007–08 Kenyan crisis and his role as UN-Arab League Special Envoy to Syria, a position he relinquished in 2012 citing the lack of sustained international support.

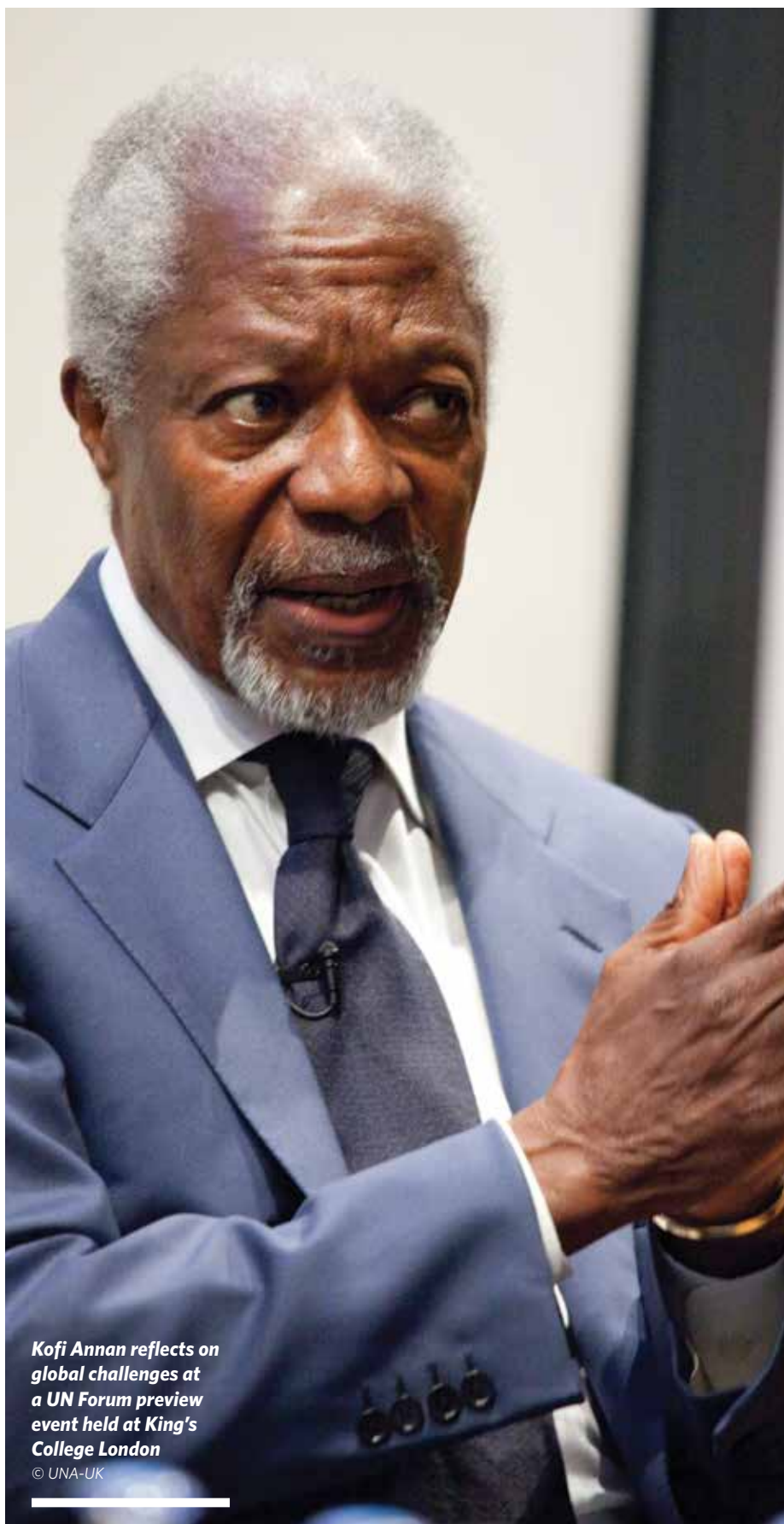
Mr Annan also spoke about his mission to convince states to ensure the UN's original mission – to serve “we the peoples, not we the governments” – was not forgotten. For this part of the interview, Mr Annan was joined by Edward Mortimer, his former speechwriter and director of communications at the UN.

Both said that telling the UN's story and engaging the public were key challenges with which the organisation continues to grapple. Thanking Sir Jeremy for his leadership of UNA-UK, Mr Annan said “organisations like yours are extremely helpful, and we need to work more closely with you”.

 A recording of this event can be found online at www.una.org.uk

“This treaty will help make the world safer, by placing human rights and international humanitarian law at the heart of decisions about the arms trade”

William Hague, UK Foreign Secretary, on the UK's ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty



Kofi Annan reflects on global challenges at a UN Forum preview event held at King's College London
© UNA-UK

UNA-UK attends Commission on the Status of Women in New York

In March the UN's annual conference for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) passed a milestone agreement on

gender and development. Addressing this year's priority theme, delegates identified a number of challenges in delivering the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women and girls. Importantly, the

outcome document called for any successor framework to the MDGs to include a standalone goal on gender equality, as well as incorporating gender targets and indicators into all other goals.


UNA-UK was represented at CSW by Policy & Advocacy Officer Hayley Richardson and Sally Spear, Vice-Chair of the UNA Women's Advisory Council, who joined over 6,000 other civil society delegates in lobbying member states. Prior to the conference, UNA-UK consulted its membership on which gender equality issues concerned them most – see our round-up below for the outcome of this action.

UK Ambassador to UN sets out Security Council challenges

A special event of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations (UN APPG) was held at Chatham House on 15 May, addressed by Sir Mark Lyall Grant, UK Ambassador to the UN.

With his predecessor, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, in the chair, Sir Mark explored the challenges facing the Security Council, and discussed those issues, such as Syria and Ukraine, on which where there has been deadlock. Despite this impasse, however, he said it is “broadly business as usual in the Security Council”. He cited conflict issues in Africa as one example of effective Council cooperation.

Sir Mark raised the appointment of the next Secretary-General as high on the UK's agenda for the Council, and said: “We would want the best possible Secretary-General with the best possible qualifications and leadership skills because we believe in the multilateral system, we believe in the United Nations, [and] we want it to be a strong institution.”


 A recording of this event can be found online at www.una.org.uk

Experts discuss next steps for R2P

Over 40 diplomats, academics and practitioners convened for a UNA-UK high-level roundtable last month to assess future prospects for the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Chaired by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, the meeting also sought to establish how the principle relates to other distinct fields, such as human rights and development. Participants agreed that there remains uncertainty over R2P's preventative aspects and how to implement it at the regional, national and local levels.

A day prior to the roundtable, the UN APPG held a meeting in Westminster to launch the second in a series of UNA-UK publications on R2P, entitled, “Mainstreaming the Responsibility to


Protect in UK strategy”. Jennifer Welsh, UN Special Adviser on R2P, and Jason Ralph, the report's author and Professor of International Relations at the University of Leeds, discussed the challenges states face in putting the principle into practice.

 For more information go to www.una.org.uk

UK government backs UNICEF campaign

The UK government has announced that it will match every pound donated by the UK public to UNICEF UK's Soccer Aid challenge, held on 8 June.

Every two years, a football match between two teams of famous faces raises lifesaving funds for the organisation. In 2012 over £4.9m was donated, reaching more than 2.5 million children worldwide. Find out more at www.unicef.org.uk.

 Former UNA-UK Chairman and UN Assistant Secretary-General, Sir Richard Jolly, has had a book published on UNICEF by Routledge. See *New World online* for more information: www.una.org.uk/magazine

Peacekeepers Day conference explores UK role in UN peacekeeping

On 22 May, UNA-UK, UNA Westminster and the Royal United Services Institute held the 12th annual conference to mark the International Day for UN Peacekeepers. This year's event focussed on reassessing the UK's role in UN peacekeeping (also the focus of our May monthly action – see below).


Speakers and participants shared ideas on how the UK might deepen its engagement in peacekeeping following the withdrawal from Afghanistan. The keynote lecture was given by Melinda Simmons, Head of Conflict Department, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and the conference was concluded with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph.

UNA-UK also announced the launch of its new programme on the UK and UN peacekeeping, funded by the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation (see page 22).

UNA-UK recommends priorities for Human Rights Council

UNA-UK has published a report on the UK's role at the Human Rights Council and what its priorities should be during its 2014–16 term. The UK was re-elected to the Council in November 2013 and hit the ground running with

a busy and productive first session in March. UNA-UK's recommendations have also been submitted to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, which held an inquiry on the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's human rights work.

 Go to www.una.org.uk to read the report

Round up of UNA-UK monthly actions



Gender inequality concerns

In March we asked you which gender inequality issues concern you most. Over 300 of you voted in our online poll, which placed education at the top of the list of concerns, and over 150 sent suggestions of other issues for consideration.



Accountability in Sri Lanka

Over 3,000 people signed a petition and joined in the global call for an investigation into alleged war crimes in Sri Lanka. UNA-UK and other NGOs wrote to the prime minister calling on him to back action at the Human Rights Council, which we're pleased to report was subsequently passed.



Improved atrocity prevention

To mark the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, we asked our members and supporters to sign a letter urging the government to improve its approach to atrocity prevention. The 230 responses have been passed to Foreign & Commonwealth Office minister Mark Simmonds MP.



UK and UN peacekeeping

In May we launched an action calling for greater UK engagement with UN peacekeeping. We've so far received more than 340 signatures – a fantastic demonstration of the UK public's support for the blue helmets.



Blue helmets lined up
in Bubanza, Burundi
© UN Photo/Martine Perret

UNA-UK announces new one-year UN peacekeeping programme

UNA-UK is delighted to announce a new programme aimed at encouraging greater UK support for, and engagement with, UN peacekeeping. Funded through a generous grant from the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation, the programme is due to be launched in July 2014.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and one of the top financial contributors to UN peacekeeping, the UK plays an important role in the approval and design of peacekeeping operations. However, over the last 20 years, there has been a marked reduction in practical engagement. UK troop contributions have declined from a peak of over 3,500 in 1993 to around 350 today, mostly based in Cyprus.

In addition to this, just two UK police officers currently serve in missions and the UK does not provide any military experts.

The winding down of operations in Afghanistan gives the UK an opportunity to reassess its engagement with UN peacekeeping. UNA-UK believes that a commitment to increased involvement would benefit not only the operations themselves, but also the UK's own peacekeeping reform goals and wider security priorities.

Over the next 12 months, UNA-UK will seek to raise the profile of UN peacekeeping among UK policymakers with a view to the general election and the next Strategic Defence and Security Review, scheduled for 2015.

W For more information on the programme go to www.una.org.uk or contact Alexandra Buskie on buskie@una.org.uk

UNA-UK stays connected

On Saturday 29 March, following the UNA-UK AGM, the Procedure Committee staged its first Staying Connected event.

This brand new event, organised in direct response to feedback from UNA-UK members, was attended by over 60 people and featured updates from Chairman Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Executive Director Natalie Samarasinghe and members of the UNA-UK staff team. These updates not only covered the issues raised at the 2013 Policy Conference, but also referred to items raised by members via the Policy Inbox, another method for inputting into UNA-UK's policy-making process.

There was also an opportunity for attendees to ask questions of the team, allowing members to glean further policy analysis from our resident experts. The event ended with Natalie Samarasinghe providing an insight into the major campaigns and events that UNA-UK will be focussing on over the coming months.

We're really pleased that the event went so well and think it is a great example of UNA-UK's efforts to strengthen the direct connection between its membership and its policy work. A high-level report from the event is now available on the UNA-UK website and planning for the 2015 Policy Conference is well under way.

Tim Jarman
Chair, UNA-UK Policy Conference

Aid budget not exempt

As a professional working in the field of local flood risk management within the UK, I was struck by the observations contained in the Executive Director's column in the last issue of *New World*.

It is clear that local authorities in this country have been hard hit by funding cuts while the overseas aid budget has been protected. I therefore consider it legitimate for people to argue for the diversion of monies to assist people at home – the first priority of any government.

This is not to argue against overseas assistance, for this should be continued, but at a time of national austerity no area should remain exempt from scrutiny.

The concerns of ordinary people should be listened to and responded to, particularly when public services are under such attack. Charity does not end at home but it begins here.

Colin Moss
Derbyshire

Editor's note: the intention was to question the way in which the media pitted spending on flood defences against overseas aid, as if this were the only choice available. UNA-UK agrees that public spending should be scrutinised and indeed we'll be debating this very issue at UN Forum on 28 June, where we'll ask a panel of experts: Is our approach to development flawed? Go to www.una.org.uk/forum for more details.

Remembering a UNA-UK stalwart

John Walters, live wire of UNA South Lakeland and Lancaster City since 1977, recently passed away at his home in Windermere.

He was a giant campaigner who fought long and hard for the UN and international peace and security.

John was also an energetic fundraiser for UNICEF and UNA-UK, and until only a few years back was also a town councillor for Labour.

He was awarded life membership to the Association by then Executive Director Malcolm Harper in 2004.

Luckshan Abey Suriya
UNA-UK Trustee

Syrian refugee crisis

I'm grateful for the humanitarian focus of the last issue of *New World*.

Author Neil Gaiman recently visited the UN refugee camps in Syria and gave an eloquent account of their hardships in *The Guardian* newspaper. He pointed out that if the UK were to host the same proportion of refugees as Jordan currently does, it would mean welcoming 6.5 million refugees to our sceptred isle.

The public should call for the UK to do more to support these refugees and ensure that this debate remains at the top of the agenda. A good start would be for UNA-UK to focus on this issue at the upcoming UN Forum.

Patricia Whisk
Colchester



Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK's Executive Director, on UN reform: if there is a silver bullet, it's you

A hundred years ago on 28 June – the date of our UN Forum – the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand set in motion events that put Europe, and through its empires the world, on a path to two devastating wars. Just as our landmark birthdays provoke self-reflection, this anniversary has challenged us to consider whether it could happen again.

Recent events certainly give cause for concern. Japan's Prime Minister has compared tensions between his country and China to the rivalry between Britain and Germany before the First World War. Others see China as the challenger to a declining US. Europe has been deeply unsettled by the annexation of Crimea (a phrase that takes me straight back to history class). In Syria regional powers are erasing the lines put in place after the Great War. It is not hard to imagine an assassination in that region, or indeed another, fuelling a wider conflict.

The main difference today is our international system. It connects us, with increasing technological ease, diplomatically, economically and culturally. I often declare: "The UN is needed more than ever." Perhaps I ought to say it's needed as much as it was when it was founded. Instead of using the UN's frontline agencies as my response to those who question its value, it might be wise to pay tribute to the UN's original purpose as a global forum. At the UN, rival states don't just rub shoulders. They discuss problems, create laws and agree joint programmes of work.

Our Forum event will consider the health of this system, and Britain's place within it, as the UN approaches its 70th birthday – another opportunity for soul-searching, with plenty of ideas included in this *New World*. On page 4, our editor set out the common fate that befalls these ideas in the "cycle of reform".

This shouldn't stop us from thinking about what we would change if we had a magic wand (see page 19). UN veteran Sir Brian Urquhart has told us of his wish to see a UN standing force. John Bolton, a former US ambassador to the UN, famously said the UN Headquarters could lose 10 floors without much impact. Nor should we let lack of progress temper what we push for. (Currently, UNA-UK is supporting campaigns on Security Council veto restraint and a better process to select the Secretary-General). But we must remember the UN's political limitations, which Bolton so admirably embodied.

This is the UN's built-in catch. There is an inherent tension between its collective, long-term aims and the narrow interests of its member states, who set its agenda and budget, and decide what it can and cannot do. To truly transform the Organization would require changing the fabric of international relations and recognising that national and global interests have converged. A flood in Bangladesh can affect European jobs and food prices in Africa. We can no longer say: these things don't concern us.

Across the world, the political mindset is overwhelmingly – and increasingly – inward-looking and short-term. How many politicians speak plainly about the depth of the challenges facing the world, or what is needed to overcome them? No wonder people switch off.

But we cannot afford to do so. If there is a silver bullet, for UN reform and the global solutions we need, it is public engagement. We need to demand more from our governments. We must show them that we value our institutions and want them to be more effective.

The Forum will provide an opportunity to do just that – come along and stake your claim. Visit www.una.org.uk/forum.



UNA Streatham & Clapham
asks, whose responsibility is it to protect?

In a week when hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members were sentenced to death in Egypt and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced an investigation into the use of chlorine bombs by the Syrian regime, South Londoners gathered to debate the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in the context of the "Arab Spring".

This timely meeting provided the opportunity for UNA-UK's R2P Programme Officer, Alexandra Buskie, to present a succinct overview of the principle and its evolution. Former foreign correspondent and local councillor John Whelan provided a colourful introduction to the Middle East and North Africa, touching upon his time living in the region and first-hand experiences reporting on the aftermath of the first Gulf war in the 1990s.

While the Middle East may seem to some to have remained unchanged for many years, regional attitudes have evolved notably since the 1970s, including in relation to the standing of women. Though the events of the Arab Spring may not always have secured liberty or security, they have at least raised expectations. Citizens have asserted their right to personal freedoms, human rights and transparent government – and continue to do so. In Libya and other countries, we witnessed the brutal steps some states will take to suppress those legitimate claims.

The Arab Spring also raised the expectations of the international community, and there is little doubt that the past three years have presented tougher challenges than the UN, or any other supra-national bodies, have yet been able to meet fully.

There remains palpable frustration at the apparent dissonance between the principles behind protecting civilians and the ability to apply them practically in fast-moving dynamic and often desperate situations. In Syria, an authoritarian central government has lost control of swathes of the country; some areas are now controlled by terrorist groups. How do we begin to apply R2P to virtually



ungoverned spaces, let alone those in the grip of intransigent regimes that threaten their own citizens?

While these questions provoke debate on both the efficacy and legitimacy of military humanitarian interventions, it is important to note that even where scenarios are grim, the R2P toolbox provides many options besides the last resort of armed intervention.

The interim options available differ according to the specifics of the situation. A good example might be to block hate speech from being broadcast on radio or television. Such speech was used to appalling effect in catalysing the Rwandan genocide and more recently by Muammar Gaddafi's denunciation of the citizens of Benghazi who had risen up against his rule as "cockroaches".

Above all, for R2P to become a living reality robustly defending civilians across the Middle East (and beyond), the mandate and means to act must be present not only at an international and national level but within the affected communities themselves. The flowering of civil society in former dictatorships will be key to this, and could be one of the Arab Spring's greatest legacies; certainly it is

one that could offer the best chance of civilian protection in decades to come. Yet we cannot be blind to the sour truth that many countries are still far from having the conditions necessary for citizen-led organisations to prosper.

Across the region, the terrain is rocky – from Egypt, where pluralistic democracy appears faltering, to Syria, where the departure of Joint UN and Arab League Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi highlights the mire confronting those seeking an end to the bloodshed. The future challenge is therefore enormous; to nurture a civil society that can be effectively mobilised in times of crisis, to ingrain a culture of respect for civilian protection at national level, and to consolidate the international will needed to ensure that nations stand ready to prevent atrocities. Our meeting made clear that, along with our governments, each of us has a part to play in meeting that challenge. ●

Paul Evans is a member of the UNA Streatham and Clapham executive and has a keen interest in the Middle East. The meeting he mentions was supported by UNA-UK through a UN Forum 2014 outreach grant



Making sense of our world: Anne Breivik
on the value of teaching young people about the United Nations

"It is extremely sad and I doubt any resolution will be successful for at least 10 years"

This comment was made by a 14-year-old student who took part in a Model United Nations event that I chaired last year. They had just finished debating the conflict in Syria. The students had limited knowledge about the conflict before they started their preparations, but after researching their assigned country's position, presenting their arguments and taking part in a sophisticated discussion, they found a peaceful solution that included a transitional government and multiparty elections. Whoever said that young people are not interested in current affairs and world politics!

The need to understand, analyse and discuss international news and events is greater than ever. Global politics is changing, with new players emerging onto the international stage and fresh issues and threats on the agenda. Social media and the 24-hour news cycle bring instant updates and the opportunities for direct action are amplified. But how to make sense of it all?

Our young people need to be equipped with the knowledge, understanding and ability to analyse critically all of this information. Citizenship is the subject best placed to offer this opportunity in the English curriculum. Thanks to a concerted campaign by UNA-UK and organisations such as the Association for Citizenship Teaching and Democratic Life, citizenship is still a statutory element of the new National Curriculum, which comes into place in September. The programme of study also retains a reference to the United Nations, but only after successful lobbying efforts from UNA-UK's members and partners.

But is the UN still relevant to understanding global affairs? Yes, is the short answer. The UN has been the cornerstone of the international system since 1945, giving birth to a comprehensive system of international law and human rights; overseeing the move

to independence of numerous countries, the latest being South Sudan in 2011; and leading international efforts to combat poverty as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals. While in need of reform, the UN is still a unique forum where all countries can meet to address, discuss and solve global challenges.

UNA-UK believes that the UN is important to the lives of young people and that they should be given the opportunity to learn more about how the Organization works and what issues it addresses. Its Generation United Nations programme works with both teachers and students to engage them in the work of the UN and nurture a new generation of global citizens. As part of this work, in 2012 UNA-UK published *The United Nations Matters*, a teacher's handbook distributed to every secondary school in the UK. Developed in partnership with UNESCO Associated Schools, it has been described by *The Guardian's* Teacher Network as "an invaluable guide" to teaching about the UN, and provides materials on the UN's three main pillars: peace, development and human rights.

To complement this, UNA-UK is now developing a new set of teaching resources for both the primary and secondary level to help schools celebrate international days. These have long been

used by the UN to draw attention to specific issues and offer opportunities for collective global action. Among those included will be World Water Day, Human Rights Day, International Day of UN Peacekeepers and World AIDS Day. The teaching pack will include fact sheets for teachers, lesson plans and other student resources.

Beverley Johnston, UNA-UK member and teacher at Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School, said: "We are delighted to be part of the pilot scheme for the international days teaching pack. Teaching about the UN's values such as tolerance, equality and understanding of others' views are the same principles that underpin our life as a vibrant school community."

Young people deserve the chance to explore and analyse these issues for themselves. After all, a 14-year-old student's assessment that the Syria conflict will have repercussions for decades to come is a statement many a Middle East expert would agree with. ●

Anne Breivik is an education consultant to UNA-UK. She specialises in social science research, public policy and global education projects and was the National Coordinator for UNESCO Associated Schools in the UK from 2007 to 2011



The last word



Thomas Nash, *Director of Article 36*, describes the challenges he faces in campaigning for disarmament

What led you to found Article 36?

Richard Moyes and I had been working together on the campaign to ban cluster bombs and both decided that we would like to engage with some new areas related to disarmament and the protection of civilians. We couldn't see any existing organisation where we would have the flexibility to work on any weapons issue that needed attention, so we set up Article 36.

This covers quite a broad range of issues. What's taking up most of your time at the moment?

We are currently preparing for an expert meeting on explosive weapons in populated areas, so that's a major focus. One of Article 36's main roles is to facilitate the International Network on Explosive Weapons, which is a group of NGOs concerned with the humanitarian harm caused by the bombing and bombardment of populated areas. This is not a new problem, but developing a clear and common position within the international community that these sorts of weapons shouldn't be used in populated areas would be a very positive step for the protection of civilians.

You've previously criticised the UN's disarmament forums as "part of the problem". What did you mean by this?

The way certain states control discussions in certain disarmament forums is undoubtedly part of the problem. The Conference on Disarmament and the Reviews of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, for example, are dominated by the nuclear-armed states, and they cannot find any common interest in moving disarmament forward.

In recent years we've seen a rich diversity in the way treaties and forums are negotiated and brought about. If we are going to make progress on disarmament, we need to be open to new ideas, new approaches and new forums. We shouldn't be held back by tradition or by some attachment to a structure that

only serves the interests of a handful of powerful states.

So what kinds of reforms do you think are needed?

I'm not sure the disarmament forums that are struggling can be fixed through reform. In the end it's the member states that need to engage more constructively. What I would say is that the consensus rule is too often abused by those who want a minimalist outcome.

It's always good to get consensus, but there should always be an option to vote if there is deadlock or if a handful of states are trying to water down an outcome to the point where it risks becoming meaningless.

The way certain states control discussions in certain disarmament forums is undoubtedly part of the problem. The Conference on Disarmament and the Reviews of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, for example, are dominated by the nuclear-armed states, and they cannot find any common interest in moving disarmament forward

Article 36, like UNA-UK, is part of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots. In May the UN held its first meeting on these lethal autonomous weapons. How did it go?

It went very well. The discussions were encouragingly substantive and interactive. We focussed on the need for meaningful human control over any potentially lethal use of autonomous weapons, and this was referred to many times during the debate

and in the chair's report. Our sense is that member states will agree to continue working on this issue in 2015. We would like to see further expert discussions to explore the concept of meaningful human control and what it means in practice. We have some ideas on that.

Civil society coalitions were crucial in calling for bans on landmines and cluster munitions. Do you still see this as a key part of disarmament campaigning?

We very much believe in the strength of civil society when it is well-organised and well-coordinated. Bringing together different NGOs as part of a national, regional or global coalition takes hard work and patience, but it can have remarkable results.

It's a question of the coalition being something more than the sum of its parts. Having diversity of organisations, cultures and languages are all really important assets. We've seen this model deliver bans on landmines and cluster bombs and we think it will deliver bans on nuclear weapons and killer robots as well.

Finally, what does the rest of 2014 have in store for you?

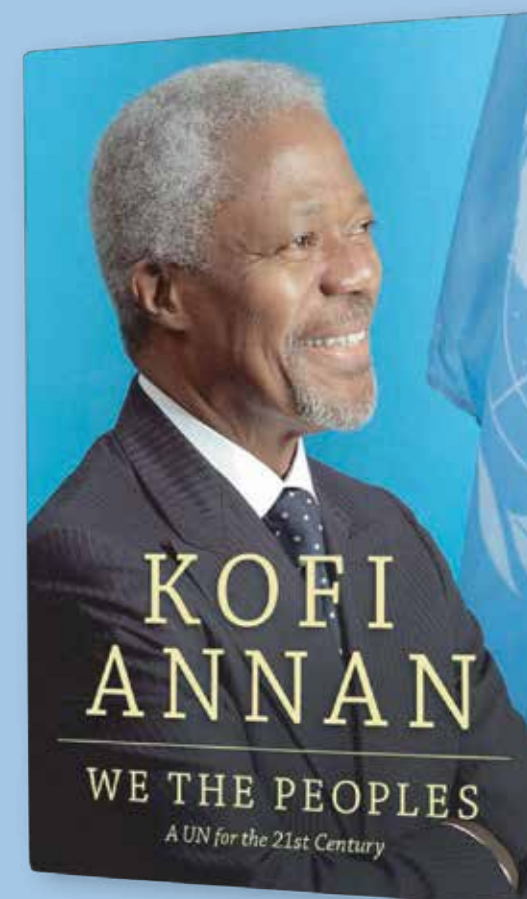
I've already mentioned the expert discussions on explosive weapons in June. Then we'll be gearing up for the meetings of the General Assembly's First Committee in October and the next meeting on killer robots in November, and beyond that it's the big humanitarian conference on nuclear weapons in Vienna in December. There's a lot going on! ●

Thomas Nash is Director of the UK-based NGO Article 36, which works to prevent the unintended, unnecessary or unacceptable harm caused by certain weapons. He also serves as a member of the Steering Group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and the leadership body of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots

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UNA-UK's work in bringing the UN to people in the UK has never been more important. We are, all of us, citizens of the world, and it is in our interests to support an effective UN that delivers global solutions to global problems."

SIR PATRICK STEWART

*Actor and UNA-UK Patron
Keynote speaker, UN Forum 2012*

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