



NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2020

Volume 21 Issue 1

MAY WE CELEBRATE THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED NATIONS 75 YEARS AGO, THANKING THE STAFF AND SUPPORTERS FOR ALL THE WORK DONE OVER THE YEARS AND REMEMBERING THOSE WHO GAVE UP THEIR LIFE IN ITS SERVICE.

UNHCR SYRIA UPDATE CRISIS NOVEMBER 2019

With the Syrian crisis now in its ninth year, the scale of humanitarian need remains staggering. In 2018 more than 1.6 million Syrians fled their homes, due to conflict in Idleb, Afrin, Dar'a, Qunetra, Deir-ez-Zar and eastern Ghouta. In October, the escalation of conflict North East Syria forced over 200,000 people to flee their homes in a matter of days. UNHCR teams on the ground were able to respond immediately with emergency aid, but the situation in the region remains extremely volatile.

Against this backdrop, more than 5 million remain stranded as refugees, mostly in neighboring countries. Despite longing to return to their homes and the lives they have left behind, refugees across Lebanon and Jordan feel the situation remains too dangerous for them to do so.

One refugee who lives with her children in an unfinished building in Northern Lebanon, expressed the feeling of many when she said "Every one of us wishes to return today, even before tomorrow comes. But we need peace and security". Safety and security are crucial factors, but not the only ones. Thousands of people's homes have been destroyed, while they are concerned about how to make a living and how they will have access to health care and schools. Until it is safe to return, UNHCR needs your support to provide people with shelter and protection.

UNA-UK MAGAZINE WINTER 2019/20 – (extracts)

1. *We need to talk* – " In short the world is in a mess. And if the world was a friend of mine , I'd be sitting down and saying, look, we really need to talk". We must craft Britain as a global leader in peace, sustainable development and human rights. At the same time we must reflect with humility and honesty on our own challenges, on our past, and on our role in the world – as a force for good, but also as a cause for immense suffering.
2. *On the Brink?* – Climate – 20 Companies are responsible for 35% of global greenhouse emissions.
3. *Demographics* – World Population Growth – By 2050, there will be more older people than adolescents and youths (ages 15-24).
4. *Global Greenhouse Emissions* – 70% of today's emissions could be eliminated with readily available technological solutions. One third of earth's surface land and nearly three quarters of our fresh water is used for crop and livestock production. Nearly one million plant species are at risk of extinction.
5. *International Migrants* – they make up 3% of the global population.
6. *Conflict and violence* – In 2016 more countries experienced violent conflict than at any point in almost 30 years.
7. *Inequality* - The income share of the poorest 20% of humanity has barely shifted since

- 1990, despite global output more than tripling.
8. *Urbanization* – Around 55% of the world’s population lives in towns and cities.
 9. *Trends, Risk and Tipping Point* – Earlier this year the Un Global Assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystems was released. One of the Press headlines simply read “ We are in Trouble”. More than 15,000 academic studies by 100 experts in some 20 countries, as well as reports from indigenous people, warned that nearly one million animal and plant species are at risk of extinction. This alone is a crisis of epic proportions. But it is only one of the pressing challenges we face.
 10. *Ten big moments in 2020* - 2020 should be decisive for the world. We are approaching a number of tipping points – planetary, economic, social and political – that have deep implications for the future of humanity. But there is still time to change our course. Here are ten opportunities we should seize.
 - i. UN75 global conversations (January launch)
 - ii. Beijing + 25, pushing forward on women’s rights (March)
 - iii. Youth plenary, a crucial platform for engagement(April)
 - iv. Banning Weapons in populated areas- getting over this line(May)
 - v. Nuclear non-Proliferation treaty – marching orders , (May)
 - vi. Ocean conference – protecting life below and above water (June)
 - vii. High Level Political Forum – (HLPF) – turbo charging the global goals(July)
 - viii. World Summit raising ambition for global governance reform(September)
 - ix. Biodiversity Conference – staving off extinction(October)
 - x. Climate Conference in November in Glasgow – have done it?

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Email info@una.org.uk or www.una.org.uk

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LONDON AND SOUTH EAST REGION(LASER) NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2019 - EXTRACTS

THE UNA TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION ON NUCLEAR WEAPON

A documentary film about this Treaty has been made.

On 7/7/2017, 122 countries voted in favour of the Treaty. Countries that do not have weapons but live under their treaty voted for a ban. Without the knowledge of most of their citizens, the governments of the world’s nuclear power did not vote, and yet the ban went ahead. Something new is happening. This film is about efforts to bring a nuclear weapon ban treaty international law and the role of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, is told through the voices of leading activists from several different organizations and countries and the President of the negotiating conference

MARKING UN75 - ACUNS LONDON CONFERENCE 2020 – THE FUTURE OF PARTNERSHIP AND MULTILATERALISM

Taking place on Thursday to Saturday June 25th to 27th 2020, at the London Metropolitan University, UK.

The signing of the UN Charter in 1945, signaled the beginning of the new dawn in multilateralism. 75 years later we need to ask ourselves: what future do we want and what UN we need (for the future). The 2020 ACUNS annual meeting provides an appropriate moment to critically reflect on 75 years of UN history. but also and perhaps more so provides an opportunity to constructively discuss the future of multilateralism and the role of partnership in the future governance of our common global good.

The Academic Council on the UN System (ACUNS) is now accepting proposals for papers, panels and posters for presentation at its thirty third AGM.

For more information on the conference, please check LASER website.

REPORT ON UNA CLIMATE AND OCEANS EVENT

With over 170 people in attendance, the UNA Conference on the above involve a dynamic and relevant panel discussion on topics such as biodiversity, climate change, education, oceans, blue economy and legislation from UN accredited international speakers. We already have plans for another conference IN Brighton next year and this will help to consolidate a UNA presence, It's a gradual process.

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF LONDON & SOUTH EAST REGION AGM 30th November)

International Court for the Environment (ICE)

The aim of the International Court for the Environment would be the promotion, development, determination of environmental law at the International level. At its heart, the campaign to establish the ICE is based on the recognition that the principal causes and effects of the world's major environmental problems are international in nature and so require solutions. Political support for this proposal has been, at its best, mixed, is gaining traction. Those lobbying for it, have been placing the proposal on the map at international climate conferences, but so far there are not yet pathways on the map linking it to action.

Campaign UNA-UK is supporting the establishment of issue-focus UNA networks such as UNA Climate and Oceans. This will enable our members and supporters to connect beyond their local communities and campaign on Climate Change – the defining issue of our time. The project has also been given its own page on the UN-UK website, so it will provide the framework to be part of the UNA-UK national movement.

This is the link publishing events

www.una.org.uk/branch/una-climate-and-oceans

Committee Election

Catherine Pluyger has retired as Chairman. She was thanked for all her work during her five year term.

Chairman Patricia Rogers

Neville Grant (Hon. Secretary)

Peter Webster (Treasurer)

13 Committee members

Full details will be found on the London & South East website and the next newsletter.

SPRING COUNCIL MEETING IS BEING HELD ON 4TH APRIL 2020

Venue: Bermondsey Village Hall, Kirby Grove, Bermondsey, SE1 3TD. 10//;30am – 17:30.

Full details on website

UNA-UK 2020 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The membership system is changing from January 2020 to make it more relevant. There will be 3 categories -

Individual - (including Standard, Household, Concessions(low income), Platinum

Student - (1 year or 3 years)

Organizations - (NGO,Corporate, Academic institution)

MISCELLANEOUS

The incidence of poverty and hunger in less developed nations is a great concern to the international community. Some of the factors that increase the vulnerability of people living below the poverty line of US\$ 1.25 per day are: climate variability, gender base violence. Discrimination and inadequate access to improved production technologies .Women and children are the most vulnerable.

Let us have the courage to champion justice and not be afraid to rebuke those who seek to use power for their own selfish ends.

The ongoing problems suffered by :

1. Zambia - there has been a bad drought lasting nearly 2 years. People are starving and unless more help is given, there will be a full grown famine.
2. A big cyclone in Indonesia caused thousands of people to leave their homes. Great damage has been done.
3. The tragic fires in Australia and the loss of life, property, trees/forest and also many million animals and insects.
4. The World Health Organization has named 2020 "Year of the Nurse". The UN has called 2020 "The Year of Plant Health", in response to increasing anxieties about food security globally.
5. Cyclone in the Philippines caused major flooding. In Turkey there has been an earthquake. In Brazil floods have caused landslides.

BRANCH NEWS

In view of it being the United Nations 75th year, if you have any ideas on celebrating this please contact Sam or Barbara.

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EAST REGION

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Next issue will be June 2020. Items for this to Sam and Barbara by 25th May 2020