



London and South-East Region

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25th November 2017 at Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA

Apologies

Jane Grant, Patricia Rogers, Genia Browning, Roger Hallam, Lucette Stevens, Viv Williams (UNA-UK Board) and Carol Horn [It was noted that the date of this AGM coincided with that of our sister organisation WILPF, and it was hoped that this clash could be avoided in future.]

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 19st November 2016

(prepared by Roger Hallam in NG's absence): these were proposed by Rodney Mantle and Jane Beeley and approved unanimously.

2. Chair's report

- The Region has continued to support the work of committee member Kishan Manocha on inter-faith and the UN, and will continue to support the work of our ex-president, Stephen Hockman, on an International Court for the Environment.
- We continue to work closely with Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and their associated group Voices of African Women, and sponsored Ethiopian human rights lawyer Blen Diriba who visited the UK for training.
- The Region's Committee had taken on Tekie Quay for an initial six months: she had been working on various projects including rape victims in Rwanda. The region is also supporting Sally Spear of WACUNA (the Women's Advisory Committee for UNA)
- The e-newsletter has produced 5 monthly issues and plans to reinvigorate the website are in preparation. Thanks to Lucette Stevens for all her hard work on this.
- We have held, sponsored or participated in a number of events –
 - Spring Council on 18th March, focusing "Combatting Violence – the central role of the UN" with guest speaker Dr David Curren from Coventry University
 - Summer Council on 15th July looked at the SDGs in the morning, with a series of working groups discussing various aspects; the afternoon featured a discussion of British Aid Priorities and Practice led by Miski Mohamed of SCF
 - The L&SER Trust has supported projects by Westminster, Eastbourne and Dartford UNAs
 - The region supports other branches including Canterbury UNA's Service for Peace at Canterbury Cathedral addressed by Helen Clark (Thank you, Nigel Gregory); and Brighton UNA, reinvigorated after a splendid performance by the UN Orchestra of Geneva,.
 - Thanks to all the members of the committee, who have also been active in their own branches and attended events held by other branches.

- Stephen Hockman QC was thanked for all his work over the past three years as President; and an address from our new President, Professor Christine Chinkin, of the London School of Economics unit on Women Peace and Security would be read out
- Peter Webster was warmly applauded for running an extraordinarily successful policy Forum in the morning. For convenience, the topics and proposers are listed below:

Westminster UNA:	1 UN Reform 2 Failure of UK to publish its strategy on SDGs 3 Official reticence on the death of UNSG Dag Hammerskjold
Westminster & Richmond & Twickenham UNA & Bruce Kent	Nuclear weapons: UK's refusal to participate in multi-lateral negotiations on Nuclear Non- Proliferation, or to ratify the treaty and act on Nuclear disarmament
Paul Tippell & Richmond & Twickenham UNA	Resolving the appalling conflict in Yemen, and calling on the UK to suspend arms sales to Saudi Arabia unless and until SA ceased indiscriminate bombing, and lifted the blockade; and other measures to achieve peaceful outcomes
Putney & Roehampton UNA, and William Say, Rosemary Addington & Leonard Beighton	Palestine 100 years after the Balfour Declaration: regretting failure of authorities to recognise the parts of the BD to defend the rights of non-Jewish people and calling for a unitary state in which all citizens should have full and equal rights [This generated a lively debate; the meeting finally recognised that a two state solution would make a Palestinian state non-viable, similar to that of the old Bantustan Bophutatswana; the areas illegally occupied by 620,000 Israeli settlers had effectively created pockets of Palestinian land scattered across the West Bank and Gaza.]
London & SE Region UNA	Sri Lanka: call for international independent judicial investigation of War crimes committed on both sides of the recent conflict and help for the Peace &Reconciliation process
Blackheath & Greenwich UNA & Jane Grant	1. The role of women in the UN 2. Working for a peaceful solution to the North Korean Situation [this resolution was discussed after the talk after the AGM by Dr James Hoare, ex-British ambassador to Pyongyang] 3 Arms sales to Saudi Arabia (subsumed in the composite resolution already mentioned)

3. Message from our new president, Dr Christine Chinkin

- The chair introduced our new president: currently Professor of International law at the LSE, and a barrister, member of Matrix Chambers. She heads a unit on Women Peace and security at the LSE, and won the prestigious American Society of International Law Goler T Butcher medal for “outstanding contributions to the development of effective realization of International Human rights Law.”
- In her message Prof Chinkin said she was sorry not to be able to attend this AGM, but is looking forward to learning more about our work, and hoped to play an active part in supporting it.

4. Treasurer's report

- Peter Webster presented the accounts
- Peter also discussed the position of the London UNA Trust, making it clear that it had funds to support projects in branches in keeping with the Trust's remit.

5. Report on WACUNA by Sally Spear

- Sally reported on the various meetings held by WACUNA during the year focusing on the prevention of violence and discrimination; but it was unclear to what extent if any these fed into the thinking of UNA-UK. Ideally, WACUNA should provide input to UNA, NAWO and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) network. David Wardrop said that this raised the issue as to how far the membership of UNA now had any significant impact on policy and procedures within UNA-UK.
- It may be recalled the same point had been made at the 2016 AGM.
- However, a monthly membership list (and a supporters' list) was now being sent out, an improvement, therefore.

6. Report from a member of the board of UNA-UK, Dr Carl Wright

- A member of UNA for decades, Carl said it was a great pleasure to be present at the meeting. He said that he had just got back from a conference in Malta of senior Local Government Association representatives, exploring how the SDGs could be implemented at grass roots level.
- He said that evidence given at a House of Commons Committee on implementing the SDGs was very critical of HMG, which had yet to formulate an action plan. UNA's job was to ensure that the UK took on our global responsibilities and responsibilities.
- On contact with the branches, he said that L&SER's e-newsletter was a very good way of keeping members informed; he and Viv Williams had visited a number of branches, and up to 200 supporters had recently joined up as members, and been allocated to branches.
- Carl reported that in 2018, the UK was hosting a Commonwealth Summit (what used to be called "CHOGM"), and it was hoped that there would be external fora on women, youth, and civil society. There was a great opportunity here for UNA to make its mark, and UNA would be liaising with the Institute for Commonwealth Studies.
- He gave some indication of the financial problems currently facing UNA-UK, and said that the key campaign was currently "Keeping Britain Global: in the light of the xenophobia generated largely by Brexit.
- It may be recalled that Gurbaksh Gatcha said at the 2016 AGM that "we needed a voice in UNA-UK." He felt that his branch was isolated, with little or no response from HQ to emails. Carl said that he would look into ways in which communication within UNA and its component parts could be improved.
- Bruce Kent said that UNA's magazine *New World* seemed to skirt round some contentious issues, like the arms trade and nuclear disarmament conference and wondered if the FCO wielded undue influence. Carl said this was not the case: indeed, the FCO had ceased its annual subvention to UNA-UK which made any such "leverage" even less likely or possible.

7. Report from Techie Quay

- Techie reported that she had attended a number of events to research various issues including rape victims in Rwanda and how people viewed the UN, especially its peace-keeping role; and examined issues on how soldiers could become peace-keepers. She was also doing work on the DRC.

8. Report from branches

- Canterbury UNA had again organized a well-attended Service for Peace in Canterbury Cathedral which had been very successful. Many thanks to Nigel Gregory for his brilliant organizational feat/
- Westminster UNA had again organized a film festival which had taken place in November in several locations..
- Gonzalo Alvarez of Bexhill and Hastings, a new member, gave a stirring plug for a forthcoming one-day conference on the sea, focusing on the threat of pollution. All were urged to put 29th September 2018 in their diaries.

9. Elections and awards

- The Stephens Trophy for branch of the year was awarded to Merton UNA for its outstanding seminars on current issues, particularly the SDGs.
- The chair reported that all members and officers of the outgoing executive committee had accepted re-nomination, and in the absence of other nominees, were duly elected.
- The Hon-Sec. made a strong plea for new members: it was not healthy for committees to be self-perpetuating, even if they did not intend to be.

Following the formal AGM and a break for refreshments, the meeting proceeded to discuss the Korean crisis. A discussion was preceded by a talk by Dr James Hoare, ex-Ambassador to North Korea, and a specialist on Korean affairs.

- In his talk Dr Hoare gave a brief summary of the history of Korea in the Twentieth Century. He said that Korea had been one country until its division in 1945, with the Soviet Union dominating the north, and the US dominating the south. The Korean War entrenched the division, and tensions had remained high ever since, none more so than after Trump became President of the US.
- He said that a military solution was “unthinkable”: Seoul had extended northwards towards the border with North Korea, and a war would create millions of casualties caused by North Korean artillery.. If either side pressed the nuclear button, the result would be catastrophic.
- The only answer therefore was very slow and patient diplomacy, which necessitated the banning of unnecessary insults, and foolish knee-jerk Tweets.
- In short, he approved of the resolution outlined on page 1.

11 End of meeting

The meeting closed at 4.45. In closing the meeting, the chair thanked Dr Hoare for his fascinating and scholarly presentation; and also all those who had attended the meeting.

Catherine Pluygers

Chair

Neville Grant

Hon. Sec.