



Apologies for multiple copies due to technical issues, now hopefully sorted!



UNA LASER Newsletter, September 2020



From our Chair, Trisha Rogers

Early in August, marking 75 years since the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs and noting that some survivors are still suffering horrific after-effects, we joined with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to [write to the Prime Minister](#) to urge the UK to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

This – and all our campaigning letters – are on our website. We hope soon to start putting these newsletters on there, too. [Let me know](#) if you'd like me to put any of your events into the calendar there.

Many of you will have joined the UNA-UK Executive Director Natalie Samarasinghe, still seconded to the UN75 programme in New York, when she addressed a Zoom meeting with us in July. She outlined the Secretary-General's categorisation of current key challenges: geopolitical tensions; the climate change emergency; risks from digital technology ('the fourth industrial revolution'); popular discontent around the world; the Covid-19 pandemic (which might also trigger violence in volatile regions). All these need more global cooperation to ensure we 'build back better'.

Natalie described how the UN75 programme is engaging with Covid-19 responses to 'build back better', such as through: their polling in 50 countries; their work with academic institutions and think tanks; their media analysis; and, above all, [their online survey](#). She encouraged branches widely to use the survey as a tool for engagement and debate.

On 21st September, the Secretary-General will make a major statement, bringing much of this activity together. The hope is to have an inclusive General Assembly partnering with the [Sustainable Development Goals Action Zone](#). Then, on 24th October (UN Day) they plan to have an event 'following the sun around the world', looking at how people in different countries are marking the day. The 75th anniversary activities will culminate with the Secretary-General speaking in London on 7th January (book this in your diaries!), leading up to the 75th anniversary of the first meeting of the General Assembly.

It is envisaged that the UK visit of the 'following the sun around the world' event will be to the **What Next for the UN? Building a More Secure World** festival that LASER is organising, with Peace Child and UNA-UK.

Festival Programme

This project will run nightly online workshops (19:00 – 21:00) on 6 aspects of security: *Health Security* (18 Oct); *Food Security* (19 Oct); *Environmental Security* (20 Oct); *Economic Security* (21 Oct); *Peace and Security* (22 Oct) and *Digital Security* (23 Oct), each generating action points for individuals, communities, nations and international organisations. On the UN's 'birthday' (24 October), an afternoon conference (from 14:30) will

have feedback from these workshops, leading to an Action Plan. After addresses from some world leaders, there will be the presentation of the UNA-UK 2020 Sir Brian Urquhart Award for Distinguished Service to the UN and a panel discussion. The evening concert (from 19:15) will illustrate *The UN – Past, Present and Future* with dramatic representations of 6 UN heroes, interspersed with music from young people around the world. The festival will end with an intergenerational dialogue on what is next for the UN.

To find out more about this event - and how to join it, go to [its website](#).

Many thanks to Jane Beeley and Sarah Webster for compiling and despatching this LASER Newsletter. Our next one will go out early in October, so please send any material to [Jane](#) by **30th September**.

News from branches and special groups

"LEGACY" virtual Art Exhibition - UNA Bexhill and Hastings

UNA Bexhill and Hastings has been supporting the art work of Franco-Algerian Artist, Patrick Altes, who is based in Hastings.

Patrick has now created a virtual Art Exhibition - "**Legacy**" - at the prestigious **Janet Rady Fine Art Gallery** in London. I invite you to visit the Exhibition, you can "walk" inside the Gallery and view all the works, it's a **fantastic 3D experience!** You will notice that UNA LASER is mentioned inside the Art Exhibition too as the virtual exhibition is also supported by UNA London and South East Region.

His work in many ways reflects the ideals of the UN and the UNA, we believe. Patrick's work is deliberately provocative, and with "Legacy" he raises poignant issues, such as colonialism, dominance and slavery, racism as well as equality, questioning the very concept of being human. "Legacy" also ties up quite well with the **Together First campaign** and invites us to discuss pending issues in the human predicament.

We have sent out a global press release in English, French and Spanish so it will have a broader appeal, as we are promoting it among the English, French and Spanish speaking world.

Here is the link to the 3D Art Exhibition

["LEGACY " virtual Art Exhibition](#)

As it is an International Art Gallery and Exhibition, we are promoting it through UNA Sweden (Malmo) and in France, as well as in Spain and in the whole of Latin America using different digital platforms. The virtual exhibition has been **visited by more than 600 people from different countries** so far, including from all over the UK, France, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, the US and many Latin American countries such as Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, etc.

Here is the Janet Rady Art Gallery website if you would like to find more information about the Art Gallery:
www.janetradyfineart.com

I hope you enjoy the Exhibition and any feedback will be most welcomed.

Gonzalo Alvarez
UNA Climate and Oceans
UNA Bexhill and Hastings
UNA London and South East Region (Committee Member)

The UNA Canterbury Branch have continued to maintain virtual meetings and communicate through our Newsletters.

At our **brief branch meeting preceding the seminar in July**, officers noted how we had used a UNA display at the Fair Trade Fair as an opportunity to explore with the Lord Mayor how we might approach the City Council to fly the UN flag on UN Day. They had also raised the potential for the City Council to declare itself a *Nuclear Free City* or to join the *Mayors for peace* initiative.

Dr Carl Wright, local member and Member Trustee of UNA-UK, then led our seminar on *The Role of the UN in 2045*. He explored the risks to and our responsibilities for seeking to ensure the UN survives and has relevance. He briefly described the two consultation events with "*we the people*" about the future of the UN, the Secretary General's UN75 People's Forum - *The Future We Want, The UN We Need*, and Together1st's *Humanity at a cross-roads: global solutions for global action*.

Dr Wright outlined the integrated report and compared it to the initial draft proposals provided for the Heads of Government, which, at that point, still needed unanimous agreement for it to form the basis for the new Declaration, to be signed at the September meeting. While all the documents recognised a need for change, there were significant differences in emphasis between the civil society groups seeking an improved structure for working with "*we the people*", both a civil society group and a formal youth structure and the governments, limiting any suggestion of restructuring the Security Council. It was noted that the UK mission was party to holding up the planned agreement, modifications have since been agreed, but we now await the declaration due on the 23rd September.

Our **virtual branch meeting, held on September 5th**, was followed by a seminar about **Current Nuclear Arms Issues - what can we do?** This was a joint meeting with members of Kent CND and the Campaign Against The Arms Trade.

We are pleased to report that the Canterbury City Civic team have agreed to fly the UN flag annually, at three sites on United Nations Day, October 24th.

We will hold a virtual **Annual General Meeting on the 5th December** and include a speaker on the **Crime of Genocide** and are now exploring with the Cathedral staff whether they might hold a **Cathedral Service in January 2021** to coincide with the final days of the UN 75th Anniversary.

Michael Vince
Secretary UNA Canterbury Branch
Mob. 07511583446



2020 Virtual Mandela Mile links twenty-five countries

On 18 July the 2020 Mandela Mile project, for which Westminster UNA played an important initial role, featured projects in more than twenty-five countries with individuals and groups completing their own 'Mandela Miles' in a variety of creative ways.

Video coverage from nine countries was coordinated by an all-female team, generating 30+ interviews with global leaders, community townships representatives and leaders of off-grid communities, all working to amplify the voices of the unheard. The livestream transmission generated over 16,000 views. The Mandela Mile Facebook group has now grown to 73,869, and 600 new subscribers have signed up as Mandela Mile Supporters.

One innovation led to 36 young leaders completing the new Mandela Mile Leadership Programme launched in collaboration with the Caux Peace & Leadership Forum in Switzerland.

The traditional after-party was held online using innovative software enabling visitors worldwide to roam across a virtual tropical beach (see image below), meeting others and sharing notes of the day's activities.

The 'Mandela Mile' is the distance separating Nelson Mandela's statue in London's Parliament Square and his bust at the Royal Festival Hall. In 2018, to mark the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth, former UN Secretary-General and leader of The Elders Kofi Annan led a large assembly marching in Pretoria. In solidarity, Westminster UNA hosted the 'Mandela Mile' with many people walking the Mile route, coining the now ubiquitous title. Following the untimely death of Kofi Annan shortly after the original march, the [Mandela Mile](#) programme has been led by Shanthi Annan, Kofi Annan's daughter-in-law. The new programme extends from his birthday in April to that of Nelson Mandela in July. Westminster UNA is proud to serve as a Core Supporter of the Mandela Mile.

Members of **UNA LASER and WILPF** have formed a working group looking at the impact of the merger of Dfid with the FCO and also the huge cuts to aid announced just before parliamentary recess this summer.

Here is a link to Trisha Rogers' letter to the Prime Minister: (<https://unalaser.org/letter-to-the-prime-minister-about-proposed-merger-of-dfid-with-the-fco>)

We had our first meeting in early August and will meet again in September with the aim to lobby parliament on the aid cuts and lack of transparency in decision making. We are currently identifying sympathetic MPs. If you wish to help please contact catherineplyugers@hotmail.com.

You are cordially invited to attend WACUNA's Special Meeting, as below. We have an excellent speaker, not to be missed! We do hope you can join in - and tell your friends.

WACUNA

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL of UNA - UK

Members, Guests and supporters of WACUNA are cordially invited to attend a short business meeting, followed by a speaker who will speak on

SUBJECT: 'Women to the rescue! Effective strategies for increasing gender equality in the workplace', with an update on the use of social media at WACUNA.

SPEAKER: Professional linguist **Lynn Everson** BA Hons, MA, MCIL, MITI was President of Business & Professional Women UK (2013-2016), is a director of 3 companies: Lifeline Language Services, Cabinet UTP in France and HCCAS, and is Vice-Chairman of WACUNA and of Widows Rights International. She is a Leader in Residence at the University of Central Lancashire, part-time lecturer in Translation at the University of Lorraine and Council member of the Association of Translation Companies.

DAY: Tuesday 15th September 2020

TIME: 5.30 p.m. to 6.10 p.m. and 6.20 p.m. to 7 p.m. (there will be a 10 minute break after the first 40 minutes) **VENUE: This will be a Zoom meeting.**

For further details of this work, please contact Mrs Rubi Bhattacharyya, Hon. Secretary, e-mail: rubirani@yahoo.co.uk

Tel. 020 8959 2805 after 6 p.m. or post to 5 Reddings Close, London, NW7 4JL

With thanks for your support and best wishes,

Sally Spear, Chair, WACUNA and Rubi Bhattacharyya, Hon. Secretary: WACUNA



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