



UNA LASER Newsletter
April 2021

From our Chair, Trisha Rogers



Current Campaigning

Restoration of UK Aid: The cuts in UK aid expenditure are having some devastating effects, such as:

- * About 5.3m fewer children being immunised and about a 40% reduction in support of girls' education;
- * A cut of almost all (80%) funding for clean water and sanitation projects;
- * A cut of desperately needed aid to Yemen of 60%.
- * A cut of the funding to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative of 95%, risking resurgence of this terrible disease.

The Chancellor has promised we will go back 'soon' to keeping the commitment made in the 2015 Act. Let's all write to our MPs to press for this. There is [a letter on our website](#) that you can adapt.

Climate Change: At the recent UNA Group's meeting with our elected trustees, Peter Webster summarised some of the many recent LASER member activities raising awareness and campaigning to create a successful COP 26. To help us all learn from - and build on - each other's ideas, you can see his presentation [here](#).

LASER is signing up to The Glasgow Action Plan: COP 26 'asks' to the UK government. You can see this paper [here](#).

Consultation to follow-up the UN's Global Conversation

UN75 and UNA-UK are encouraging supporters to take part in the Igarapé Institute's consultation to help the Secretary-General make recommendations "to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges". To find out more and how to take part follow [this link](#).

LASER Summer Council

17th July, provisionally 10:30 - 16:30 on *The UN: Past, Present and Future?* Twickenham and Richmond branch of UNA (TRUNA) are kindly hosting this event. This may be our first non-virtual event: can we remember how to do those? Will we recognise each other? More details will be sent out in the next Newsletter, but mark it in your diaries.

Support for Branches

Carbon Footprint

Our Environment Officer, Annesha Kar Gupta, will soon be sending round the annual survey about our branches' carbon footprints, as agreed at our 2019 Policy Conference. As we prepare for COP26, this will help us share ideas on the action we can take.

Check your Entry on our Website

We want to encourage all UNA supporters to link up with branches, so it is important that the [descriptions on our website](#) are up-to-date, so people can choose the branch(es) that suits them best. Please check that your branch is well described and has the correct contacts listed. [Let me know](#) if you would like anything changed.

Newsletters

Many thanks to Sarah and Peter Webster for their work on this Newsletter. **Please send news and announcements for the next Newsletter to [Neville](#) by 18th June.**

Requests for Help from Branches

Canterbury UNA

[Please suggest](#) a speaker who can provide a history of UN concern and progress on its Programme of Action on Population and Development.

Ipswich and District UNA

Do you know a Climate Change film that has inspired you that you think might inspire others and could be shown at the Ipswich and District UNA stand in the Green Zone at COP 26? Suggestions, please, to Charles Croydon [by email](#) or on 078 5477 6870.

News from Branches

Streatham & Clapham UNA

Nuclear Weapons, Robots, Diplomacy Or Aid: Where Is Security To Be Found? 10 May, 19:00-20.30

UNA-UK's Head of Campaigns, Ben Donaldson will speak about the UK's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, following a brief Branch AGM. Contact [Sarah Webster](#) for the Zoom link or join the call [here](#).

Luton UNA

Climate Change: Challenges & Solutions on 22 May, 16:00 - 18:00 BST

This important and exciting international webinar on Climate Change has a strong emphasis on solutions. Two specialist speakers – one from the USA and the other from the UK - will raise our knowledge levels higher and inspire us to take appropriate actions individually and collectively.

All our guests will have an opportunity to ask questions to clarify the climate change issues they have been grappling with and explore further the solutions offered by our speakers.

Do invite young people in your families and social networks. They will find it interesting and it will give them more of the information they need to champion the existing movement for stopping and reversing climate change – the greatest existential threat to life on earth.

Please [register here](#) and confirm attendance by [emailing here](#).

Westminster UNA

Monday 24 May, 18:00 -19:00 BST: Westminster UNA Young Professionals will hold the fourth in their *Meet the*

Ambassador series, inviting HE Omar Al-Nahar, ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

2021 marks the centenary of the founding of the Emirate of Transjordan, its earlier name. In opening this one-hour zoom meeting, Mr Al-Nahar will introduce his country and its key achievements over these hundred years. After he looks ahead to Jordan's development agenda, the Young Professionals will host a Question-and-Answer session.

All are invited. To register for this free event, [click here](#).

Thursday 27 May, 10.00 - 3.30 BST: Our 18th annual conference to mark the **International Day of UN Peacekeepers**, jointly organised with the Royal United Services Institute and UNA-UK, will be online. Established itself as one of the UK's most authoritative reviews of UN peacekeeping activities, its speakers will comment on the government's recent Integrated Review and review the UN's progress in Mali where UK troops are currently deployed, also the broadening role of women in today's operations. Due to COVID, the traditional diplomat's wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph will not take place but Westminster UNA will create a film for screening after the keynote address.

For more information and to register, [click here](#).

Saturday 21/Sunday 22 August: Westminster UNA will host a [Welcome United Nations Green!](#) party to celebrate the arrival of this new London landmark. Exciting series are promised and, with the nearby Methodist Central Hall and the QE2 Centre offering refreshment and toilet facilities, UNA members can be assured they will have a good time.

The weekend also marks three important UN-recognised International Days: Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism (21st); Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief (22nd); and Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition (23rd). NGOs linked with these initiatives will be invited and also members of faith and belief groups in London. More information will follow on the Westminster UNA [Future Events page](#).



Climate and Oceans UNA

This year, the United Nations launches the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021 - 2030), an important and essential global initiative for the sustainability of the Planet. The aim is to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. The Decade also seeks to mobilise a global movement to reverse biodiversity loss and to continue the efforts in tackling the climate crisis.

Therefore, the UNA Climate & Oceans, in partnership with Seaford Environmental Alliance, UNA Bexhill & Hastings, Community Supporters and Bexhill Environmental Group, warmly invites you to the **UK Launch Event of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, as part of the UNA Biodiversity and Climate Crisis Summit on **Wednesday 2nd of June 2021, 17:30 - 21:30 BST**. Keynote speakers are:

Professor Jacqueline McGlade, University College, London, Chief Scientist UN Environment Programme 2013-2017 on Transforming our Future: Human - wildlife - climate interactions;

Dr Tony Whitebread, President of the Sussex Wildlife Trust on Biodiversity, Climate, Rewilding and Urban Development.

Please register [here](#).

Canterbury UNA

UNA Canterbury held a well attended zoom meeting in April, entitled ***Living Mask Free on a Healthy Planet?*** Professor Stephen Peckham (University of Kent) focused on how air quality affects all aspects of the Climate and Biodiversity emergencies. He described local impacts and his hopes to work more directly with the local Council to mitigate this.

Richard Bourne (Commonwealth Ramphal Institute) noted that the coroner's decision that air pollution was the cause of Ella Kisdobra's death will impact throughout the Commonwealth, through the Commonwealth Common Law mechanism. He explained that the Commonwealth is leading on the UN's Right to Breathe initiative and can contribute to the broader UN agenda through its various networks and regional blocks.

UNA Canterbury's **Entebbe-linked project** has resulted in our partners forming a local Business Forum and exploring with the Chief Executive of our Business Improvement District (BID) whether or not they might seek to follow the UK model. We are also encouraging the Canterbury Mayor and SDG lead officer to present an outline of our project at a suitable local event during the **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali in June**.

Forthcoming events include:

- **July 11th**, recognising ***World Population Day***.
- **Sept.11th**, - ***Democracy Day*** meeting – highlighting democracy in all its forms.
- **Oct. 24th - UN Day: *UN Flag raising by Canterbury City Council*** and potentially our ***Annual Peace Service*** in Canterbury Cathedral, UNA Canterbury's contribution to the Canterbury Climate Action Week (25th - 30th), preceding COP 26.
- **Dec 4th: UNA Canterbury AGM** with a speaker on ***Modern Day Slavery*** (Dec 2nd UN Day for Abolition of Slavery)

Warwick UNA

Global to Local on Climate Change on Saturday 15th May, 12:00 - 14:00 BST

This meeting starts from a local focus, building on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, but members of other UNA branches might find it helpful in generating ideas for how you can engage in your local areas on Climate Action.

Warwick District Council has adopted a Climate Emergency Action Plan and as a result has initiated a People's Inquiry for the District. The Council had sent out 5000 invitations to residents at random in the District: letters to 5000 local residents, 500 responses received, from whom 30 have been selected to reflect the District's

population in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, geography, deprivation.

Panellists include: Dave Barber (Council Director on Climate Change); Nat Dyakov-Richmond (Inquiry member); Chris Philpott (environmental author and activist). This meeting is to share the results of this Inquiry and the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

To join the meeting, please follow [this link](#).

Northern Ireland UNA

Personal Reflection on the UN: The UN's Relevance for Northern Ireland Today on 18th May, 19:30 BST. This free online talk by Stephen Farry, MP and Deputy Leader of the Alliance Party, is part of the Northern Ireland UN75 programme. For more information and to register, [follow this link](#).

Update from the London UNA Trust

Emergency Fund for refugees suffering the impact or aftermath of Covid. For details please contact [Catherine Pluygers](#).

Here are some examples of the kinds of projects we would like to support. These are not exclusive.

- Helping provide food, clothing, shelter and access to basics services for refugees.
- Providing access to services, housing, translation, legal help, education to refugees.
- We are particularly keen to help projects working with unaccompanied minors.

Please note: You can't apply for money for yourself; grants from £200 to £800 are available; please consult with us first if you wish to apply for a grant larger than £800.

We are particularly interested in supporting existing United Nations Association groups who are already working in this area and wish to extend their work with local communities in order to help promote the values of the UN.

The trust also provides grants for work on the SDGs; supporting UNA groups using social media or working with other NGOs, working with diaspora groups or supporting young people's participation in the discussion of international issues.