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November 2022

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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

International News

News from a handful of nations dominates our media, even as much more consequential events are happening elsewhere. To make this worse, UK domestic politics has recently been so turbulent that even the most important international stories are being squeezed out. [Proximities](#) is a free daily newsletter that briefly draws our attention to three non-Western news stories; I wonder if others of you might find this as useful as I do.

LASER November Campaign

An example of a country that is often neglected by the media is Somalia, the subject of [this month's LASER campaign](#) written before the recent terrible terrorist attack in Mogadishu, so with even more urgency now. Our Campaigns Officer, Valeria Minisini, has summarised the situation and suggests actions for us.

Climate Issues

As we approach COP27 in Egypt (**6 – 18 November**), LASER members might like to support the Climate Coalition (CC, to which we belong) in stressing – less than 12 months since our then Prime Minister said, “It’s one minute to midnight on that doomsday clock and we need to act now.” – that the UK public want urgent action on the climate and nature crises. We are delighted that our current Prime Minister has now decided to attend COP27; perhaps our King could do so, too. Do write to your MPs about this to reinforce the message of public concern. Any UNA members attending COP 27 might like to meet up at the WFUNA [meet-and-greet event](#) there.

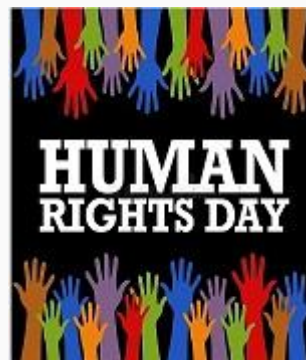
CC offer the recognition of [Green Heart Hero Awards](#) for people and groups helping to create a cleaner, greener future. I’m sure some LASER branches could make strong nominations. Perhaps there were contributions to the Great Big Green Week (GBGW), whose activities are summarised in [this film](#) which might also give inspiration for next year’s GBGW, on **10th – 18th June 2023**.

LASER can be proud of environmental activities of its members and branches, particularly UNA Climate and Oceans (led by Gonzalo Alvarez, LASER’s Climate and Oceans Officer), which has coordinated several clean-up activities around the world. Their remarkable young people have also focussed on their base area of Sussex to produce [an inspiring video](#) on rewilding. Do share this with your local schools!

Governance

LASER AGM and Human Rights

This will be a hybrid event on UN Human Rights Day (**10th December starting at 12 noon**) at Bermondsey Village Hall, Kirby Grove, London SE1 3TD.



We hope many of you will join us in person. Directions to the hall from London Bridge mainline station are [here](#). If you plan to come in person, please [register here](#) to help us judge numbers for refreshments, though last minute attendees are very welcome too! (Please bring a packed lunch.) If you plan to join us by Zoom, please [register here](#). We shall email out the papers to those who have registered for the AGM on 4th December. There will **not** be paper copies available for everyone at the meeting.

At 2pm, we will hear from Dr Maria Varaki of the Department of War Studies at King's College who has worked for the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in New York and for the Legal Advisory section of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Since November 2017 she has been a member of the ILA Committee on human rights in times of emergency. The event will finish at 3pm.

Distinguished Service Award

Many people do remarkable – but often not widely noticed – work to promote international understanding through UNA branches. We like to recognise this service through our annual UNA LASER Distinguished Service Award.



Please send [our Secretary, Jane Beeley](#), and [me](#) by 3rd December, nominations for this award, with a brief explanation of the service they have given.

Executive Committee

At our AGM we elect 6 members of our Executive Committee, as well as our Executive Officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). The Committee meets about every six weeks, mostly by zoom. Please send [our Secretary, Jane Beeley](#), and [me](#) by 3rd December, nominations for the Executive Committee. These nominations should include a proposer and a seconder, and include the agreement and a statement from the candidate.

Resolutions

Officers, members of the Executive Committee, branches, youth groups, corporate members and any six members acting together may send in resolutions and other matters for the agenda. If you have any motions that you would like put to the AGM, please make sure they [reach Jane](#) and [me](#) by 13th November.

UNA-UK Trustee Elections

The elections for our representative on the UNA-UK Board close on **15th November**. All paid-up members should have received details of the candidates and of how to vote. If you have not received this, please [let me know](#) asap.

Special Notice

A Thanksgiving Service for William Say will be held at St Nicholas church, Harpenden on Saturday 26th November 1pm.

His full obituary is now [on the LASER website](#).

Forthcoming Events

UNA Harpenden

UN Day Service on Sunday 6 November at 18:30 at [St John's Church, St John's Road, Harpenden AL5 1DJ](#).



“ St. John's is a down-to-earth church where people can feel welcomed and accepted. It is a community of people who, in their different ways, are trying to live out God's love.”

@St John's Church

Rev Tim Yeager, of Waltham Abbey, will give an address on *The UN Role in Peacekeeping*. Please register [here](#).



Remembrance Day Parade and Service on Sunday 13 November at 10:50 at the [Memorial Cross, Church Green, Harpenden](#). To be part of the UNA Harpenden procession to the Memorial, please assemble in **Rothamsted Park, Leyton Road at 10:15**. The parade and service should conclude by 11:20. RSVP [here](#).

A talk on *Privacy, Surveillance and the Internet* by **Bruce Schneier**, Security Guru, Harvard University, on **Tuesday 13 December at 19:30** on Zoom (click [here](#) to join Zoom).



UNA Streatham & Clapham

are holding a hybrid event on **Tuesday 8th November at 7.30pm**, with Jessica Cruse, Programme Officer for UNICEF UK's *Child Friendly Cities & Communities*. She will discuss UNICEF's global work as well as the specific support the agency is providing to Lambeth to create a more Child Friendly Community. The venue is **The Community Room, West Norwood Library, 1-5 Norwood High Street, SE27 9JX**. Or you can join online via [this link](#).

Child Friendly Cities and Communities works with councils to put children's rights into practice. It is part of Child Friendly Cities, an international initiative which UNICEF launched in some 50 countries for the benefit of 30 million children. Lambeth is presently on their journey through the three stages to become a recognised a UNICEF Child Friendly Community.

UNA Climate and Oceans

have organised **The Ocean Symposium and Marine Exhibition on 19th November** with the theme *Empowering Communities for Ocean Action*.



The event will showcase exciting new Sussex underwater marine biodiversity, as well as unique international Ocean short films. Please book tickets [here](#).

Uniting for Peace

are holding a zoom meeting on *World Peace in Peril: Challenging False Narratives on 29th November 18:00-20:00*. Speakers include Vijay Mehta, Chris Hedges, Andreu Ginetet, Rev. Brian Cooper, Frank Jackson, Bernie Holland and Luke Addison. The zoom link is [here](#).

UNA Luton

invite you to attend a webinar to mark **UN Human Rights Day 2022 on Sunday 11 December at 16:30**. The focus will be on *Homelessness*, considering the right to shelter as one of the most fundamental human rights. According to the UN Human Settlements Program, over 100 million people globally have no home, and this number is rising every year because of conflicts, the climate crisis, food shortages, commercial exploitation, government action and inaction. [Here](#) is the zoom link.

The FCDO Association

is organising an online talk by **Dr Roger Lipsey** on *Dag Hammarskjöld and his Legacy* on **14 December at 14:30**. Tickets cost **£5**. Please book [here](#). The zoom link is [here](#).

Report from UNA Climate and Oceans

For three weeks ahead of the World Cleanup Day on 17 September 2022, UN Climate and Oceans organized environmental protection activities, working with Eleven Twelve Foundation, Global Peace Foundation Tanzania, Global Peace Women Tanzania and Born2save Tanzania. Their policy of using sports to encourage young people to participate in volunteering to protect the environment has helped to increase the number of participants.



Participants in different actions during clean-up activities at Coco Beach



School farm visiting for participants and learn on how students managing that farm on environment conservation

Newsletter

The newsletter was co-edited by Salem Mezhoud and reviewed by Trisha Rogers. It was despatched to members by Suheil Shahryar. The deadline for the material for the next newsletter to reach [Salem](#) and [Trisha](#) is 30th November.

