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The Laser Pulse
The Newsletter of UNA LASER

2023 Issue No. 8

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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

This autumn there are many reasons for special focus on the UN.

- The opening of the General Assembly was marked by the normal [High Level meetings](#) – without, for the first time in a decade, [the presence of the UK Head of Government](#)
- September 26 was the 10th [International Day for Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#). LASER has endorsed the [Protect the People and the Planet appeal](#)

- Halfway through the process for the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), only 15% of the goals’ targets are on track. To summarise the situation and raise our ambition, Project Everyone has released [this film](#), based on Al Pacino’s epic locker room speech.
- We prepare for the crucial COP28 in Dubai (30 November – 12 December) amid fears that the UK is planning to weaken our net zero policies. LASER has endorsed [this letter](#) to the government. Al Gore’s [latest TED talk](#) summarises the situation well
- 10th December marks the 75th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. There are ideas for marking this [here](#), where the 75 day countdown has begun and is being marked daily by stories, videos, fun facts.

At this time when the UN will be more in the news than ever, people will be searching online for how they can be involved. It is crucial for us to seize this opportunity to engage with new people. Several LASER groups’ information on the UNA-UK website is out of date or non-existent. **Please ensure that your Groups/Branches’ information is up-to-date on the UNA-UK website.** (Find your Group/Branch [here](#); if the description needs updating, [send](#) a new description of your branch, so the UNA-UK team can update their website.) You can submit upcoming events for promotion on their website by clicking [here](#). Please also ensure your description on the [LASER website](#) are up-to-date and [send us](#) any revised branch/group descriptions.



AGM



Our AGM will be a hybrid event on **Saturday, 28th October, 11:30 (please note changed time!)** 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 23rd October. There will not be paper copies available for everyone at the meeting.

Executive Committee

As specified in [our constitution](#), at our AGM we shall elect the members of our Executive Committee, as well as our Executive Officers (Chair, Treasurer, Secretary). The current committee can be seen [on our website](#). The committee meets about every six weeks, mostly by zoom at 19:30. Nominations for the committee and Officers should be [sent to me](#), please, **by 7th October**. Each nomination should include: up to 100 words about the person; their branch/group; the names of the nominator and the seconder. Please ensure that the person is happy to be nominated and would expect to attend most EC meetings.

New President

We greatly appreciate the support our President, Sir Peter Bottomley, has given us for the last 3 years, and thank him for his term of office. On 28th October we are delighted that our new President, HE **Dr Fatou Bensouda**, High Commissioner of Gambia and former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), will be joining us and will speak on ***Reflections of a Former ICC Chief Prosecutor***.

Inspirational Branches

Our branches/groups engage in a wide range of innovative and inspirational activities. We shall hear a range of their experiences, from simple to ambitious.

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 UNA LASER Distinguished Service Awards. Please [send our Secretary, Jane Beeley](#), **by 7th October**, nominations for this award, with a brief explanation of the service they have given.

Resolutions

Officers, 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 me](#) by 7th October.

LASER Policy Conference



The LASER Policy conference will be a hybrid event in Bermondsey Village Hall ([here](#)) and on zoom on **9th March, 2024**. This is your chance to help decide what stance the Region should take on a wide range of international issues. Resolutions need to be on an international topic and must call for action by the UK

government or the UN. They can also set out background facts or statements of concern that you would like the Region to support, and they can be put forward by UNA Groups/Branches or individual members. You can see our current resolutions for inspiration and for the framework we use [here](#).

New resolutions should be of a maximum of 175 words. You can also suggest amendments to existing resolutions which should add not more than 75 words to the total length of the resolution. Please send in draft policy resolutions to our [Policy Committee Chair](#) by 5pm on **29th January, 2024**. The draft agenda (with motions amalgamated as appropriate) will be circulated early in February to give you an opportunity to propose amendments.

William Say UN Internship



Following the death of lifelong UNA member William Say last year, his friends have been thinking of ways of honouring his memory. William had served as an intern at the UN both in New York and Geneva, roles that he funded through savings and by working in various part-time jobs. Unlike other countries, the UK offers no financial help to people seeking to get on what for many could be the first rung of the UN career ladder.

UNA Westminster and Harpenden branches, with which William was closely associated, are setting up a project group to establish William Say UN Internships to enable young people to participate in a UN internship who

would not otherwise be able to. The project group will be holding its first meeting shortly. Please contact [Paul Mrazek](#) for further information or if you wish to join the group.

As we pass the midpoint of 2023, and with the imminent meeting of the UN General Assembly, and then COP28 [we reflect on our campaigns](#), noting developments and new priorities; where change is needed, we must keep up the pressure.

Support For Branches



On Peace Day (21st September), UNA Streatham and Clapham ran some assemblies in local schools. The PowerPoint and script are available for other branches/groups to adapt and use. Please [contact us](#) if you would like a copy.

Events

UNA Brexhill and Hastings

On **21st October 2023, 10:45 – 16:30**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings is marking UN Peace Day with an events on ***Climate Change & Refugees*** at St. Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill, TN40 2HE. The event will include, in the morning, an interactive exhibition on *Peoples' Progress and Success in Making Peace and in Social, Economic & Environmental Development*. After a BYO lunch, there will be a presentation about UNESCO, followed by café-style workshops. For more information and to register, please contact [Sheila Kesby](#) or [register online here](#).

UNA Climate and Oceans

On **18th November, 10:00 – 16:30** at St. Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill TN40 2HE, UNA Climate and Oceans is co-hosting **The Ocean Symposium and Marine Exhibition 2023**, addressing ocean pollution, ocean acidification, underwater ecosystem restoration, ocean technology, climate change, sustainability, international and local projects, networking. There will be thought-provoking discussions led by experts. The cost is £6. [Go here](#) for more information and to register.

On **2nd December, 13:30**, as part of COP28 Fringe, UNA Climate and Oceans is co-hosting – for young people aged 15-30 – the **Climate and Sustainability Youth Summit** at Imperial College, Exhibition Road, SW7 2BX. Go [here](#) to register and for further information.

UNA Greenwich and Blackheath

On **13th November, 19:00**, UNA Greenwich and Blackheath, together with the University of Greenwich, will hold a meeting at the university on **Youth Participation in Climate Policy: digital activism and climate change**, with the speaker **Oluwatobi Aigbogun**. There will be further details in a future *Pulse*.

UNA Harpenden



On **30th September, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden will host a free in-person meeting on **Agonies of Empire - The Second American Civil War?** at the Salvation Army, Leyton Green, Harpenden AL5 2TG. The speaker will be Emeritus **Professor Mick Cox**, LSE, founding director of LSE IDEAS. Please register [here](#).



On **14th October, 11:00-13:00**, UNA Harpenden are holding a public discussion group meeting on **Does our education system need reform?** at the Park Hall, Leyton Road, Harpenden AL5 2LX. To participate, please register [here](#). Participants will be asked to pay £4 per person to cover the hall rental charge.



On **24th October, 10:15 (for 10:30)**, to celebrate UN Day, the Town Mayor, Fiona Gaskell, will be raising the UN Flag and making a short speech, along with the Chair and members of UNA Harpenden. The event will take place at the back of the Town Council. After the flag raising, we will be convening for refreshments at the Council Chambers. Register [here](#) if you wish to attend. Attendance is free for all.

UNA Luton

On **21st October, 16:00-18:00**, UNA Luton will hold a virtual meeting on **Is the United Nations, as currently structured, relevant to our times?** The speaker will be **Chris Sharwood-Smith**, Deputy Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, who has extensive experience of working with the UN as a diplomat. For further information, please contact [Dr Nazia Khanum](#). [Here](#) is the Zoom link

UNA Westminster

On **15th November, 18:30**, in the House of Lords, Room 1, UNA Westminster is hosting a meeting on **When our Cultural Heritage is Destroyed, Our Children are Dispossessed** to be addressed by **Professor Peter Stone**, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property

Protection and Peace. Wars have destroyed many cultural sites, often UN registered, deemed the common heritage of all humankind. The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict has been ratified by many nations but then what? For further information and to register go [here](#).

In **February (TBC)**, UNA Westminster, with the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, is hosting – at Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, and online – a hybrid conference on ***The Continuing Search for Truth: Next Steps for the UN Commission of Inquiry into the death in 1961 of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld***. This event will comprise a keynote address and sessions reviewing the unique ongoing UN inquiry and efforts to suppress it; Hammarskjöld's legacy in Africa; opportunities and obstacles to find the truth and its contestation, and more. As more information is available, it will be on the [UNA Westminster Future Events page](#).

UNA Warwick

On **30 September, 12:15-14:00**, Warwick UNA will hold a hybrid meeting at Leamington Spa Baptist Church, Chandos Street, CV32 4RN, on ***International Migration – World in Crises***. The speaker will be **Jonas Kaufman**, from Oxford and Essex Universities. Tea/coffee/biscuits will be provided. For further information, please contact [Gian Clare](#). [Here](#) is the zoom link.

LASER Summer Council 2024

On **22nd June, 2024**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings will kindly host the LASER Summer Council in Bexhill. The theme will be Peace and Human Security: ***Ploughshares into Swords?*** Further information will be in future editions of *Pulse*.

Next Deadline for Submissions

Please [send us](#) any materials or suggestions for the next edition of *Pulse* by **1st November**.

NB: For announcement of events, it is helpful if you can download and use [this template](#).



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