



## United Nations Association

### London & South East Region

From: The Policy Conference Chair,  
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The Rt Hon Lord Cameron,  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH  
United Kingdom

17<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear David Cameron,

### **The views of UNA members and supporters in London & the South East**

You will be aware of the work of the United Nations Association which, since 1945, has advocated UK action for global cooperation, a stronger UN and a better world. UNA-UK seeks to build movements, provide expert input and design campaigns dedicated to promoting human rights, peace and security, and systematic transformation at the UN.

Local, regional, and thematic UNA groups organise a wide range of activities independently throughout the country, and I believe you used to correspond regularly with UNA-UK's former director, Malcolm Harper as a constituency MP in his capacity as Chair of the Charlbury branch.

I write to you as Chair of the Policy Conference of the London & South East Region of UNA to share the policy resolutions adopted on the 9<sup>th</sup> March on a hybrid Zoom call of 40 + UNA members and supporters from around London & the South East. I attach the full texts (alphabetically, by topic).

During the conference, we updated long-standing policies on creating a ***Financial levy for clean water*** (R.3); ***Hong Kong*** (R.4) and ***Nuclear weapons*** (R.7).

We also agreed three resolutions related to the terrible situation in Gaza in the aftermath of the October 7<sup>th</sup> atrocities and with the continued holding of hostages by Hamas and others in contravention of international law.

The first of these (R.9 on ***Palestine 100 years after the Balfour Declaration***) builds on our previous policy setting out general principles for addressing the underlying conflict. We welcome your recent statements on the potential recognition of Palestine and we now call for this as a necessary step to advance negotiations. We oppose any attempts by Israel to remove or relocate Palestinians from Israel or the OPT as well as any further settlement activity or annexation and we call for full recognition of the fundamental rights of Palestinians, and for all parties to this conflict to abandon calls for the destruction of other parties.

The second (R.2 on ***Collective Punishment in the OPT***) condemns in the strongest terms the collective punishment of innocent civilians in Gaza that we see today. We conclude that the time has come for the UK to stop selling or assisting the transfer of weapons to Israel until Israel complies with its responsibilities as occupying power, with the Geneva Conventions and with the relevant orders of the ICJ. We also call on the UK government to follow others in restoring funding to UNRWA, and to work to protect the agency and its work for reasons including those set out so clearly by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the UN on 5<sup>th</sup> March.

The third related resolution (R.10 on ***Proposed laws restricting boycotts, divestment or sanctions***) addresses the anti-BDS bill which we regret to see the government is still pursuing, even in the current context with Israel potentially acting in breach of the Genocide Convention which would leave all public bodies with obligations to prevent and punish such actions, rather than seeking to exempt Israel from scrutiny, and when the government has (quite rightly) started to use some sanctions in relation to settlor violence as well. As a civil society organisation deeply committed to people campaigning for a better world by all legitimate means, we also see this as an attack on free speech and as limiting other important campaigns, such as those on the Uighur forced labour.

We also discussed the situation in ***Ukraine*** (R.15) and called for the government to remain resolute in its support; to continue to strengthen sanctions (including seeking to limit the role of Russian military and aerospace companies elsewhere in the world); and to continue supporting legal initiatives against the international crimes committed whilst looking towards an end point that provides for both the integrity and the security of Ukraine, Russia and all neighbouring countries. In that context we also call for diplomacy to work towards a consensus in the African, Chinese and Ukrainian peace initiatives, though we are very aware of the gaps between them at present.

We consolidated our previous ***Climate*** resolutions (R.1) with a particular focus on CoP 29, and on the need for a clear plan in the UK to meet our existing commitments for 2030 and 2035 which is viewed as credible by the Climate Change Committee. We also call for meeting our Climate Finance commitment of £11.6 billion without reducing other ODA spending or leaving poorer countries with further debt obligations; and for an end to fossil fuel licences and investments in view of their negative impact on the speed and likelihood of achieving net zero.

In resolution 5 (***How did Dag Hammarskjöld die?***) we call for full cooperation with Judge Othman's inquiry including access to all relevant documents held by the UK government or security services.

We passed a new resolution on ***Kashmir*** (R.6) condemning brutal crackdowns or media control and urging that both Pakistan and India abide by past UNSC resolutions and the Simla agreement.

We updated our resolution on ***Our world after the pandemic*** (R.8) to urge the UK government to play a full and constructive role in the WHO negotiations for a Pandemic Treaty and to ratify and comply with the resultant recommendations and other outcomes.

In (R.12) ***Second Voluntary National Review of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*** we urge a commitment to a Voluntary National Review fully engaging civil society by the beginning of 2025 and the promotion and funding of Local Voluntary Reviews here and globally. We see this as helping to re-establish the momentum behind these important global objectives which you played such a key role in creating in the run up to their adoption in 2015.

In (R.13) ***The UK's diminished role in the UN's Human Rights treaty bodies*** we call for the UK to re-engage with the UN's Human Rights bodies and nominate candidates for election once again.

We updated our previous resolution on refugees in (R.14) ***Treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and Europe*** to align with the proposals of the Campaign to Stop the Inhumanity on Europe's Borders.

We also passed a new resolution on ***Universal Healthcare & family planning*** (R.16) stressing the critical importance of family planning and universal health care for women's health and the welfare of families and communities as part of aid programmes and multilateral agencies' budgets, and pressing for full implementation of CEDAW to enable women to access such services.

Bearing in mind the scale of these and other challenges facing the international community, we called in (R.11) ***Resourcing to strengthen the UN for current global challenges*** for a doubling of resources for the UN and its agencies over a 5-year period, as well as scrupulous payment of pledges made and for work on longer term more stable funding mechanisms.

The London & South East Region speaks for itself in these matters and is not claiming to represent the views of UNA UK nationally. We would nonetheless welcome your response to the various issues and calls for government action in the enclosed. We plan to share your response with UNA members and supporters in London & the South East as we have done with FCDO responses in the past (including on our website) to encourage further debate and discussion, including with local MPs.

We greatly look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Webster', with a horizontal line underneath.

Peter Webster

Chair, UNA London & South East Region Policy Conference