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2025 Issue No. 7, June 2025

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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

At the recent annual memorial service marking the deaths of UN civilian, military and police personnel who have died in the line of duty, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said “To our staff still serving in crisis zones across the globe, I say: We will not accept the killing of UN personnel”.

The Secretary-General [paid tribute](#) to the 168 UN men and women who died in the line of duty in 2024, noting at the annual memorial that their deaths are a “reminder of the thousands of UN personnel who serve around the world today, carrying out the missions entrusted to them by the countries that make up these United Nations.” 2024 was “especially devastating” in Gaza, where 126 UN staff members were killed, all but one of whom served with UNRWA. More than 170 journalists have also been killed since 7th October 2023 while reporting on the war in Gaza. We must make our voices heard to help end this devastation and suffering with a solution fully respecting the human rights of Palestinians as well as Israelis.

Campaigning

As flagged in the last Pulse, we were pleased to get [detailed response from the Foreign Office \(FCDO\)](#) to this year’s updates in our [members and supporters resolutions](#). This provides an opportunity for members and supporters to start or build on a relationship with your local MP: pressing for more action where you feel the response is insufficient; and indicating your support for positive moves. You can also ask them to bring further questions to the attention of the relevant minister, in which case the minister is expected to respond. [Our Policy Committee](#) would be very interested to see copies of any correspondence you get back from your MP and to hear any suggestion you have for other ways we can support you in undertaking this important work.

We encourage members to [engage with their MPs](#) when trying to influence UK government policy. We can, of course, all also write directly to the relevant [ministers](#), but ministers usually read only letters from MPs (while most other letters are dealt with by officials), so we prioritise getting MPs on board and encouraging them to contact the relevant ministers and ask questions in the House. It is important to give your address when you write, so your MP knows you are a constituent.

Israel/Palestine



In light of the continuing horrific suffering in Gaza, our government needs our support, encouragement and pressure to follow up the 19th May statement of the Prime Minister. We have updated our draft letter for MPs to include reference to the disastrous Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's activities. Here is a summary you could adapt (but keep to fewer than 1000 characters) and submit to Contact Number 10. We are urging the government to:

- put maximum pressure for the reintroduction of full, impartial and independent humanitarian support
- end all arms supplies to Israel
- apply full sanctions to Israel
- support regional diplomacy to build a long-term peace
- and – acting with partners including France and Canada – recognise the state of Palestine now, at this time of great peril.

Low- and Middle-Income Country Debt



Courtesy: Nick Fewings (Unsplash)

Debt and austerity drive authoritarianism across the Global South, according to a new report. The United Nations' Financing for Development conference (FfD4) in Seville at the end of June could be a pivotal moment for debt justice. A generation ago, campaigners around the world won \$130bn in debt cancellation for countries in debt crisis, which had a real impact on people's lives – with more money available to fund public services like education and healthcare. But the underlying issues that caused the crisis were never addressed. Decades on, there is still no fast, effective and fair debt relief process for countries in crisis. Sign this petition to call for a binding, transparent and inclusive legal framework, a UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt.

If you are following this up with your MP, our resolution on the UK Aid budget also proposed that the UK should help developing countries improve their own finances and development by improving their trading

conditions; investing in programmes to increase diaspora contributions from citizens living and working abroad and supporting Tax for Development initiatives including taxing transnational companies and wealthier citizens more effectively.

Joint Action for Climate and Nature



On **9 July**, there will be a mass lobby of parliament to help shape a better future, coordinated by the Climate Coalition of which LASER is a member.

Participants will ask their MPs to:

- deliver vital funding to communities hit hardest by climate change here and around the world
- cut bills, back UK jobs and secure a greener fairer future for all
- restore nature to create a safer, healthier future.

[Go here](#) for further information and to sign up.

UNA LASER Events

Summer Council

There are a few places left at the **UNA LASER Summer Council**, being hosted by UNA Westminster on **21 June, 11:00-16:30**, at **Methodist Central Hall**, Westminster, London **SW1H 9NH**. [Register here!](#)

With the theme ***The United Nations at 80: challenging times for “We the Peoples”***, this prestige event, located in the same building as the inaugural UN General Assembly meeting in January 1946, will mark the eightieth anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter in June 1945 in San Francisco. The programme will feature presentations, discussion, film and the launch of the ***Wall of Peace*** on UN Green, of which you can become a Founder Builder [here](#). Speakers will include **Professor Can Yeginsu** (High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom), Mark Bowden, former senior UN staff, reporting from South Sudan, Jane Kinninmont, the incoming UNA-UK CEO and others. Letters of Goodwill will be read from **Daniel Lurie** (Mayor of San Francisco) and **The Lord Mayor of Westminster**. We hope **the Minister for the United Nations** will join

us. Please [register here](#) for this free event.

AGM and Presidential Address

The **UNA LASER AGM** will be held on **25 October** at **Sands Film Studio**, Rotherhithe, London **SE16 4HZ**, a 381-bus ride east from London Bridge station. This will include the final Presidential Address for our President, **Her Excellency Dr Fatou Bensouda**, as she comes to the end of her 3-year presidential term. Please [send us](#) suggestions for future LASER Presidents to join [this distinguished list](#). The day will also include presentations of inspirational activities from some of our member groups, which will later be added to [the list on our website](#). Please [let us know](#) if your group would like to describe one of your activities.

Groups' Information and Support

Group Descriptions and Activities

There is a list of LASER Groups [on our website](#). Please check your entries and [let us know](#) of any changes you would like made.

As well as publicising activities of our LASER Groups in *Pulse*, we also sometimes publicise other activities in our region that are relevant to our work, as well as activities outside our region that are accessible online to people in our region. Please see the end of this newsletter for how to submit material.

Carbon Footprint Questionnaire Response



Courtesy: Jeremy Bishop (Unsplash)

To help groups comply with the 2019 LASER Policy Resolution that all our groups should report annually on their progress on addressing our carbon footprints, our Environmental Office, Annesha Kar Gupta, has circulated the questionnaire which you can download from [here](#). Please would all groups complete the survey and return the completed survey [to Annesha](#) as soon as possible.

Marking UN80



UN80 gives many opportunities to engage your local community, media and leaders in thinking about the work of the UN and our roles in helping its effectiveness. There are three key dates that you could use: 26 June (when the Charter was signed in San Francisco); UN Day (24 October, when the UN Charter came into effect); 10 January 2026 (80 years since the first meeting of the UN General Assembly, which was held in London).

Some groups mark the day by their local Council flying the UN flag, floodlighting its building in blue, or inviting MP(s) and other local leaders and media to a flag-raising ceremony. Note that an Eightieth Anniversary is an Oak Anniversary, so you might like to mark UN80 by planting an oak in a prominent local position, with appropriate ceremony, community and media involvement, and plaque.

UNA Northern Ireland have kindly agreed to share [this letter](#) they successfully wrote to all their local Councils in case it might be useful to other groups.

Support for Groups' UN80 Activities

The London United Nations Association Trust is offering support to projects marking UN80. To apply for a grant please go to [their website](#). To discuss projects and ideas, the Trust is hosting a webinar on **18 June, 19:30**, registration [here](#): please see more in the Events section below.

Other UNA Events

UNA Harpenden



On **14 June, 10:30-12:30**, UNA Harpenden invites you to a public lecture at the **Salvation Army**, Leyton Green, Harpenden **AL5 2TG** on ***Israel's Treatment of the Palestinians*** by **David Harrold**, Palestine Trauma Centre. He will consider how ordinary people are coping in the face of ethnic cleansing. Here is more about the [talk](#) and the [speaker](#). Please register [here](#).



On **20 September, 10:20-12:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a public lecture at the **Salvation Army**, Leyton Green, Harpenden **AL5 2TG** on ***UN Peacekeeping in the 20202*** by **Dr David Curran**, Coventry University. Please register [here](#).

UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden



On **17 June, 19:00**, at **The Old Auction House**, The Pantiles, Linden Park Road, Tunbridge Wells **TN2 5QL**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden will present ***Artificial Intelligence: Unleashing the Potential and Exploring the Limits***, with **Grace Munyiri** (founder of Cacumator Mentorship) and **Tia Chang** (Chief Data Officer, Gallagher). For more information and to book this free event, please go [here](#).

UNA London Trust

On **18 June, 19:30**, UNA London Trust is hosting a webinar to discuss how UNA London Trust can support projects and ideas for marking UN80. Please register for the webinar [here](#). For further information, please contact Trust Chair, [Catherine Pluygers](#).

UNA Bexhill and Hastings



On **5 July, 13:30-16:30**, at **St Peter's Community Centre**, Bexhill-on-Sea, **TN40 2HE**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings is hosting an in-person meeting on ***Re-Making our NHS in-keeping with WHO's 'Health-for-All' Policies***, led by **Sheila Kesby** and a Representative from East Sussex Adult Health & Social Care. They will contribute to the Government's 10-year NHS Plan by: historical review to right the wrongs of the past; re-developing community care to relieve hospital pressures; restoring the ethos of the 1946 NHS Act; and WHO's 'Health-for-All' policies 1978-2018. Please register with [the Chair](#).

UNA Warwick District

On **12 July, 12:30**, UNA Warwick is hosting a free hybrid conversation at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church**, Chandos Street, Leamington Spa, **CV32 4RN**, led by **Lauren Muir** (UNA-UK), on ***Nuclear Weapons still threaten us all TODAY! What can we do about it?***. Lauren will talk about UNA-UK's disarmament work and campaigning strategy, as well as what practical steps we can take - as individuals and communities - to influence UK policy and global attitudes. As more countries enhance or expand their nuclear arsenals, the possibility of use - by design, miscalculation or accident - becomes disturbingly plausible. This is *not* just a foreign policy issue; it's an existential challenge. To register or get the zoom link, please contact [Gian Clare](#).

UNA Wandsworth



On **19 July, 18:00-21:30**, UNA Wandsworth is hosting an interactive public meeting and workshop to look at the ***Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)***. It will be at the **Community Church Putney**, Werter Rd, Putney **SW15 2LL**. The evening will include a presentation followed by a workshop about CEDAW. And short presentations from members of our women's diaspora groups about their work. For further details please email [Catherine Pluygers](#).

UNA Canterbury

On **26 October**, in the late afternoon, UNA Canterbury will be holding its annual Peace Service in **Canterbury Cathedral**. More details will be coming in future editions of *Pulse*, but do save the date!

UNA Climate and Oceans



On **15 November**, UNA Climate and Oceans will join policy makers, civil society organisations, marine scientists, artists, educators and young people for an event with the theme ***WONDER: sustaining what sustains us***. This day – dedicated to protecting and celebrating oceans – will include expert speakers, new marine project launches, panel discussions, underwater films, community-led ocean initiatives and a showcase of cutting-edge ocean technology and marine innovation, as well as many stalls.

UNA Working Groups

These Working Groups bring together groups and individual members to work together on key areas. There are no set structures or required outcomes. They mostly meet online and might want to develop campaigns, awareness-raising materials, presentations, resolutions or reports.

If there is a topic you would like to research and take forward in consultation with other interested members, do [contact us](#) about starting a new UNA Working Group.

Local Implementation of the SDGs

Several LASER UNA groups, working with their local Councils on [local implementation](#) of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), have created this Working Group to support and learn from each other. Some UNA Groups have several years' experience of this work and have established effective local SDG committees; others are just starting. Groups usually work with other local civil society groups: to consider how best Councils can develop their infrastructure to meet local needs; to persuade their Councils to adopt the SDGs into their strategic planning; and to encourage their Councils to submit their Voluntary National

Reviews to the United Nations.

Please contact Co-Chair of UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald, [Marguerita Morton](#), if you would like to join this Working Group.

SDG Guidance and Use Cases

Since September 2024, this Working Group has been meeting every eight weeks to exchange experience and collaborate to promote the adoption and implementation of the SDGs by UNA groups. One of the group's members is a UK representative at the ISO/UNDP PAS 53002:2024, *Guidelines for contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. The ISO/UNDP guidelines address: setting SDG impact objectives and targets; engaging with stakeholders; collecting data on impacts; generating options; making risk-based decisions; and understanding trade-offs to increase positive impact. We intend to generate an overview resource from this standard for the benefit of other UNA groups. We also discuss specific SDG adoption, research and use cases by various groups including SDG initiatives on SDG2 (hunger) and SDG 13 (climate impact) in UNA Enfield and the Barnets.

Please contact [Ali Hessami](#) for further information.

Strengthening International Law - Replacing the Charter

Members will discuss [this new, potentially history-making document](#), written by an International Consensus on UN reform. The group will be chaired by LASER Head of Policy, Peter Webster, and will convene by zoom. For further information, please contact [Greta Vipond](#).

Achieving Peace in Europe



This Working Group, launched on 21 May, aims to develop a resolution on ***Defending Europe Responsibly*** for submission to the 2026 UNA LASER Policy Conference, to be accepted by LASER and then presented to the UK Foreign Secretary and other European leaders.

The background information to the formation of the

working group can be found [here](#), with further information [here](#) in the paper ***How does Europe defend itself responsibly*** by **Suheil Shahryar**. To join the group, please register [here](#).

Imagining a UN Fit for the 21st Century

The classical and inflexible governance of the UN, built around classical institutional models of post war era, renders it unfit for a dynamic and new multipolar world order. The UN governance can and should be re-engineered for the brave new world.

This Working Group is adopting a novel research method creatively to explore the drivers and opportunities for a reformed structure and governance, leading to a UN that will be agile, inclusive, representative, transparent, accountable and fair to the needs, rights and values of the international community in this century of exponential change and shifting power dynamics. It is intended to produce a consensus-based, ideal structure/governance/regulatory model and associated brief narrative for the UN in the 21st century.

The group has agreed that the aim of the creative study is ***UN Reforms through Diverse, Representative and Agile Coalitions***. For more information, please contact [Ali Hessami](#).

Systemic Transformation Network



This Working Group was launched at the UNA Groups' Meeting on 27 May by **Professor Barrie Oxtoby** of UNA Shropshire. Barrie Oxtoby has many years of experience working with the UN, including with **Kofi Annan**, on the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Barrie and Suheil Shahryar (UNA Harpenden) are planning to develop systemic transformation frameworks to deliver the SDGs.

The group is currently clarifying their methodologies. For information, see [here](#). They would be keen to hear from others with experience on systemic transformations. Go [here](#) to apply for membership.

UN Security Council Veto Reform

This Working Group was convened by UNA Luton in November 2024 and brought together a few members, with some international experts as advisers, to consider how to make the UN Security Council more effective, with particular emphasis on the veto. The work was initiated because of policy commitments made by UNA Luton and UNA Bexhill and Hastings.

The group has proposed a solution it calls the **Accountable Veto Resolution Initiative (AVRI)**. A resolution of the UN General Assembly would ask the Elected Members of the Security Council to test every veto for compliance with the UN Charter and, if necessary, call an emergency session of the Assembly with a recommendation for collective action. This needs only a General Assembly resolution passed by a simple majority and does not require amendment of the UN Charter.

The group had [its resolution](#) accepted at the LASER Policy Conference on 15 March and the full AVRI proposal was launched at the UNA-UK conference on 12 April. The conference asked the UNA-UK Board to consider adopting it as national policy. UNA Scotland arranged an online webinar on 22 May to discuss this initiative. The discussion following the presentation was very productive and led to a further broad-based meeting on 30 May called by Peace Child International. The outcome of that meeting was that the Impact Coalition on Just Institutions and the ICJ (International Court of Justice) offered to coordinate further meetings to progress both the AVRI and Professor Jennifer Trahan's ICJ Resolution which AVRI endorses and to which is closely linked. The working group has now ceased its deliberations because the task from here on is to work with others to get the AVRI resolution laid before the General Assembly as soon as possible.

Financial Support for LASER

LASER does not ask for subscriptions from its members or groups, nor does it charge for attendance at its events. We therefore welcome donations to UNA London and South East Region account. Please [let us know](#) if you would like to make a donation.

The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **25 July 2025**. Please keep announcements short and include all the information requested in [the Pulse template](#). We welcome pictures, but **please ensure that any pictures you send are not copyright-protected, as we add each edition of *Pulse* to our website for public access and would be liable for copyright fees.**



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