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2025 Issue No. 11, November 2025

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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

Thanks to those of you who joined us for our AGM on Saturday, in-person and online. The papers for the event are on our website, where we shall add the draft minutes.

We used the event to recognise the excellent work being done by UNA Harpenden, whose Chair, Suheil Shahryar, received the Stevens trophy on their behalf. We marked with a LASER Distinguished Service Award the retirement of Andrew Boakes, standing down after many years on the LASER committee and even more years as UNA trustee, and Chair of the Policy Conference. We also thanked retiring LASER committee member Hana Shono, who continues to support LASER by finalising and mailing *Pulse*, as well as chairing the UNA Conference Committee.

LASER President, HE DR Fatou Bensouda finished her 3-year term of office with a fascinating and informative Presidential Address on the international rules-based system and the challenges it faces, as well as the important contribution made by community groups like LASER. We shall soon be sharing her speech on our website. We have greatly appreciated learning from her experience as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court – seen through the lens of her analysis of some current contentious international situations – as well as her ability to share her expertise and respond to questions.

I have now exceeded my term of Office, so we are looking for someone to **take over as Chair**. Do contact me to find out more about the role.

We would also like a **new Treasurer** to work with Peter Webster with a view to taking over the role. The person would help finalise the transfer to our new bank account. Our annual expenditure is less than £1,000 with fewer than 10 payments per year, so administering it is not a large amount of work, and we do not need a qualified accountant; the person would need to have some experience of book-keeping and be able to keep records on Excel. They would work with our helpful independent examiner to prepare the accounts for our AGM.

Please send any suggestions (including yourself!) who might like to start sharing either job in preparation for taking it over.



Campaigning

We encourage members to [engage with their MPs](#) when trying to influence UK government policy (which can then influence UN actions). 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 full home address when you write, so your MP knows you are a constituent.

Sudan



Since April 2023, Sudan has been experiencing the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The international response has been completely inadequate. LASER is a member of *United Against Inhumanity* and we encourage our members to join with them in calling for the appointment of a high-level UN Humanitarian Envoy for Sudan to:

- Focus international attention on civilian needs and sustain momentum
- Re-energise fundraising by raising public awareness
- Support negotiations for humanitarian access across front lines
- Provide strategic coherence with respect to the three million Sudanese refugees in neighbouring states
- Reinforce the work of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Port Sudan who is constrained by the authorities.

For further information, see this *United Against Inhumanity* [article](#).

LASER Events

LASER Policy Conference

Our Policy Conference will be in March or April 2026, in central London and online, starting in the late morning. Draft resolutions will need to be submitted by late January. The draft resolutions will be aggregated by the Policy Committee and circulated in mid-February, with the deadline for amendments being late February. Further details on dates, venue and exact times will be in future issues of *Pulse*.

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. The Policy Committee may also share resolutions with political party leaders and with other actors of influence in the issue concerned. Resolutions can propose policies and set out background facts or statements of concern that you would like the Region to support, and they can be submitted by UNA Groups or individual members. You can see our current resolutions – for inspiration and for the framework we use – [here](#). **New resolutions need to be 175 words or fewer in total. You can also suggest amendments to existing resolutions which should add not more than 75 words to the total length of the resolution. Please do not send in longer resolutions, as this creates considerable additional work for the Policy Committee.**



LASER Summer Council

On **Saturday 11th July 2026**, UNA Eastbourne will host our Summer Council, at the **Birley Centre, Eastbourne College** (10 minutes' walk from Eastbourne station). The focus will be ***The Climate Crisis: Risk Assessment and Adaptation***. On **Sunday 12th July**, UNA Eastbourne will organise a walk along the Peace Path to the UN monuments at Beachy Head. So, keep the whole week-end free to spend in Eastbourne! There will be further details in future editions of *Pulse*.

UNA Group Events

UNA Southern Region

On **15th November, 14:00-16:30**, UNA Southern Region is holding their AGM, at **St John's Church, Newbury, RG14 7PY**. The meeting will be presided over by **Tony Vickers**, the Chair of West Berkshire. The meeting is free and will include tea; all are welcome. For further information, please contact the [Southern Region Chair](#).

UNA Climate and Oceans



On **15th November 10:00-16:30**, UNA Climate and Oceans will join policy makers, civil society organisations, marine scientists, artists, educators and young people for an event at **St Peter's Community Centre, Bexhill TN41 2HE**, with the theme ***Ocean 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. The cost is £7.21 and you can book [here](#).



On **22nd November, 13:30**, UNA Climate and Oceans is joining with the Leverhulme Centre for Wildfires, Environment and Society to host a ***Climate and Sustainability*** Youth Summit, at the **Lecture Theatre CAGB 200, Imperial College, Exhibition Road, London** to discuss the development of COP30 and come up with proposals for the future. The event is happening during COP30, so will have the most

updated information available. There will be inspiring keynote speakers, interactive workshops, and opportunities to engage in thought-provoking discussion. Tickets for this free event are available [here](#).

UNA Harpenden



On **22nd November, 10:30-12:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a free hybrid public lecture on ***Responses to Children Living in Poverty Overseas: The impact of education in sustainable development*** by **John White** (CEO, Global Care) at the **Salvation Army, Leyton Green, Harpenden AL5 2TG**. More about the speaker [here](#); please register [here](#).

On **24th January, 18:00**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a ***Burns Night Supper*** at **Park Hall, Leyton Road, Harpenden AL15 2LX**. There will be songs, poetry, dancing and delicious Scottish food. The cost will be £30 per head, to be paid **by 24th November**. Please register [here](#).

UNA Blackheath and Greenwich

On **25th November, 18:30**, UNA Blackheath and Greenwich is joining with the University of Greenwich to host a free event on ***Refugee Protection in Turbulent Times***. The speakers will be **Vicky Tennant** (UK Representative, UN High Commission for Refugees) and **Chloe White** (CEO, Action for Refugees in Lewisham). The talk will be at the **University of Greenwich, 1st Floor, Queen Anne Building, Room 180**. To attend, please send an email [here](#).

Events of Other Organisations

Debt Justice

On **8th November, 10:00-17:30**, Debt Justice (of which LASER is a supporter) is hosting their ***Debt Justice National Gathering*** at **Oxford House, Bethnal Green**,

London E2 6HG. Speakers – including **Heidi Chow**, **Grace Buckley**, **Sotez Chowdhury** and **Jo Barker-Marsh** – will explain about the 54 countries currently in debt crisis and also share campaigning skills and plans. The event is free, with lunch provided. Reserve your place [here](#).

Movement for the Abolition of War

On **9th November, 15:00**, the Movement for the Abolition of War is holding its **Annual Remembrance Lecture**, to be given by **Lord John Alderdice**, Director of the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict, Oxford. He will be talking at **Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD** on *Ending Wars*, wondering if it will be possible that out of the immediate worldwide crises of wars and climate catastrophe a new approach can be fashioned to deal with our deepest differences. For further information see [here](#). The event is free, but please register for tickets [here](#). Following the lecture, at **17:00** at **Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road NW1 2BJ**, **Every Casualty Counts** is launching its *Memorial 2025*, remembering stories of people who lost their lives to armed conflict in 2024, projected onto Friends House.

Climate Coalition



On **27th November, 13:00-18:00**, the Climate Coalition (of which LASER is a member) is holding a hybrid **annual movement gathering** at **Lift, London N1 9PW**. The event will celebrate achievements, strengthen connections and plan next steps. The formal event will finish at 16:30 and be followed by drinks and nibbles, with opportunities for networking, including the inaugural great Big Green Quiz. For further information and to register, please go [here](#).

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.

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 or easily reached by people in our region. Please see the end of this newsletter for how to submit material.

Marking UN80



Congratulations on the many and wide-ranging local UNA events marking UN80! There has been blue floodlighting of official buildings; raising of UN flags; faith and belief events; refurbishment and relaunching of a League of Nations birdbath; lectures and discussions; coffee mornings; and evening receptions.

If your group has not yet marked the anniversary, it is not too late. The key UK date is 10th January (80 years after the first meetings of the General Assembly and Security Council in Westminster, London). January is also a good time to plant a ceremonial oak (the symbol of the 80th anniversary). We need to raise awareness of the astounding world-changing achievements of the UN, as well as the huge challenges it now faces and for which it needs the vision and support of its Member States (and their peoples),

including especially the 5 Permanent Members of the Security Council, whose status and privileges come with great responsibility.

Support for Groups' UN80 Activities

The London United Nations Association Trust is offering support to projects marking UN80. To apply for a grant, please use the form on [their website](#).

Useful Resources for Teaching about the UN

Teach the UN was developed by the UN Visitor Centre for children aged 5-18 to help teachers include UN content in their teaching.

UNA-UK Learn and Teach Hub is a collection of resources on the United Nations for teachers and students.

Home – Go Goals! SDG Board Game aims to help children understand the Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations Matters is a teaching resource to develop students' awareness and understanding of the UN system and the global issues it tackles.

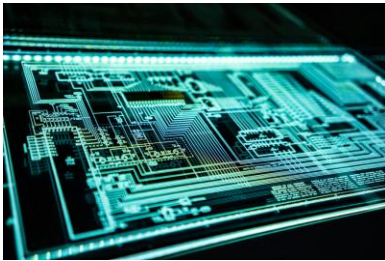
2025 Young People's Climate Fund

On 10th November, Save the Children UK will launch the 2025 Young People's Climate Fund offering grants between £1,000 and £3,500 to support youth-led and climate-focussed activities in London (as well as in West Yorkshire and the West Midlands), giving young people the opportunity to raise awareness of the impacts of the climate crisis and how it affects children and young people in the UK and across the world. **Applications must be received by 30th November.** Contact [Save the Children UK](#) for further details.

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.

Digital & Emerging Technologies



In December, the UN created the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, to support the newly adopted *Global Digital Compact* (GDC). The GDC is a framework that supports an open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for everyone. The GDC will seek to address governance, inclusion, and access across technology and AI. This new Working Group will investigate and decide in which areas of the GDC we can lend support and develop plans and actions to advance its objectives. All are welcome to join. People with experience in governance, community-led technology groups, open-source software and experience in emerging technologies (such as blockchain, AI, BioTech, IoT) are encouraged to contact us. We expect to meet remotely every other month, with planned in-person gatherings occasionally. As we focus on particular topics, meetings may occur more regularly. Please contact [Cameron McAnsh](#) for more information and to join the group.

Local Implementation of the SDGs

Several LASER UNA groups, working with their local Councils on local implementation of the UN 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 Wealden, [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 8 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 shall 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.

Achieving Peace in Europe

The group 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 Sharyar**. To join the group, please register [here](#).

Tyranny, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction - Interrogating the Draft Second United Nations Charter

The Group aims to assess how well this Second UN Charter (written by an international consensus on UN reform) will strengthen International Law through a series of discussions, each starting with an attempt to 'diagnose' the root causes of our unpeaceful world, which in its present course, is predicted to make itself extinct. It will then try to find, in each case, a 'cure' for this 'disease', working from our own experiences and our findings in the 'Second Charter'. Finally, in each case, and later in summary, it will attempt to expedite these 'cures' through the 'force of law' - as expressed in all the various forms of International Law. The group will be chaired by LASER Head of Policy, Peter Webster, and will convene by zoom. For more information and to join the group, please contact Greta Vipond. Even if you do not want to join the group, Greta Vipond would be very interested to receive your responses to the following 3 questions, as this would add greatly to the work of the group:

- What are the basic requirements for effective, and dynamic World Governance at this moment in time?
- What are the core principles you would like to see as the basis of a Second UN Charter?
- Which core principles should we retain that are embedded in the present UN Charter?

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 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 and to join, please contact Ali Hessami.

Systemic Transformation Network

This Working Group was launched by **Professor Barrie Oxtoby** of UNA Shropshire. Barrie 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. They are currently clarifying their methodologies. They would be keen to hear from others with experience on systemic transformations. For further information, see [here](#).

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.

How about a monthly ‘cup-of-coffee £3.00’ in the form of a standing order? Please [let us know](#) of any donation.

The Next Edition of *LASER Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **30th November 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. Please note, too, that, since previous editions of *Pulse* are available on our website, **any announcements should include only information (such as contact details) that you are happy to have publicly accessible on the internet**.



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