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2026 Issue No. 1, January

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The Next Edition of *LASER Pulse*

From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

80 years ago this month, London hosted the nations of the world for the first meetings of the UN General Assembly and Security Council. At the state banquet he gave for the delegates in London, King George VI noted that “this ancient capital provides a worthy setting for the momentous discussions to come. In the long course of our history, no more important meeting has ever taken place within its boundaries.”

The United Nations is now needed as much as – if not more than – ever, with the global community deciding how best to deal with crises (in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Venezuela, ...), as well as huge humanitarian and health challenges. So it is good both to look back at the enormous achievements of the last 80 years, and also at the challenges and best strategies for the years ahead. Come and join the UN Secretary-General and leaders of our national and international communities at Westminster Central Hall on 17th January for talks, panels and performances. And do help to publicise it widely! [Book here!](#)

UNA-UK would welcome people from different faith traditions who would be open to taking part in the civil service at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, on 17th January from 11:00 to 12:00. Please [contact us](#) URGENTLY if you would be open to taking part!

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.

The ‘Forgotten’ Frontlines of 2026

Our Campaigns Officer, Valeria Minisini, reminds us that, as we enter 2026, the global landscape feels more fractured than ever. While the eyes of the world remain fixed on high-profile geopolitical rivalries, a ‘New World Disorder’ is quietly taking hold. In this era, conflicts are becoming more protracted, more violent against civilians, and—most dangerously—more invisible.

We cannot afford to ‘forget’ these crises. When a conflict slips from the headlines, the political pressure for a ceasefire vanishes, and the funding that keeps people alive dries up. A life in Khartoum, Goma, or Naypyidaw is worth no less than a life in any other global capital. Turning our backs doesn’t make these problems go away; it merely ensures they will return to the global stage later, often in the form of total state collapse or regional contagion.

In [her article](#), Valeria focuses on Sudan, DR Congo, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Somalia and urges us to: challenge the aid retreat; end impunity; prevent global instability; uphold the UN Charter. Please ask your MP to:

- **Commit to the *Forgotten Crisis Fund*:** Ask that the UK ring-fences a portion of the foreign aid budget specifically for under-reported emergencies where the UN appeal is less than 30% funded.

- **Put Diplomatic Pressure on Myanmar & Sudan:** Demand the UK lead a push for a global arms embargo on the warring factions in Sudan and the junta in Myanmar.
- **Use the 2026 Future of Development Conference:** The UK is set to host a major summit this year. Ask your MP to ensure that the agenda isn't just about trade, but also about the survival and protection of the world's most vulnerable people.

Israel/Palestine



We are, of course, delighted that hostages have been released and more humanitarian aid is entering Gaza, but the killing of Palestinians has not stopped, and the aid is being restricted (and likely to be more so, with increased Israeli restrictions on some of the humanitarian organisations). We need to move towards the next stage of the Peace Plan. But one of the key factors in negotiations is having visionary, popular and diplomatic leaders on both sides. This has long been lacking for the Palestinians, exacerbated by many of their leaders having been killed during the conflicts. Marwan Barghouti – who has repeatedly said that he supports only unarmed resistance – is the most popular Palestinian leader, but has been in Israeli prisons for 23 years. LASER supports the *Free Marwan* campaign and asks our readers to ask their MPs to [e-mail them](#) to support [the Free Marwan statement](#).

LASER Events

LASER Policy Conference

Our Policy Conference will be **on 28th March, 2026**, at the Sands Film Studio, in Rotherhithe, London SE16 4HZ and online, **starting at 11:30am**. Draft resolutions will need to be [submitted](#) by **26th January**. The draft resolutions will be aggregated and circulated in mid-February with the deadline for amendments being **2nd March**. The final agenda will then be circulated before the meeting.

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 on the issue concerned. Resolutions can propose policies and also 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 and may lead to the resolutions being rejected.



LASER Summer Council

NOTE REVISED DATE AND VENUE!!

On **Saturday 4th July 2026**, UNA Eastbourne will host their Summer Council, at Eastbourne's **Victoria Baptist Church, BN21 1UE** (about half an hour's walk or short bus ride from Eastbourne station). The title is ***Climate Challenges' Risk Assessment and Adaptation Costs: International and Local Perspectives***. On **Sunday 5th July**, UNA Eastbourne will organise a walk along the Peace Path to the Peace Memorial at Beachy Head. So keep the whole weekend free to spend in Eastbourne! There will be further details in future editions of *Pulse*.



Other UNA Events

UNA-UK



On **17th January, 2026, 12:00-17:00**, UNA-UK is celebrating **UNGA at 80**, marking the 80th anniversary of the first meeting of the UN General Assembly, in Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, with panels on *Peace, Security and Justice, Addressing Planetary Challenges, A UN Fit for Future Generations*. This will be attended by leaders in international cooperation from the UK and around the world. Registration is [here](#); please make a generous donation to help cover the costs.

UNA Harpenden

On **24th January, 2026, 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](#).

Groups' and Members' 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.

Supporting UNA-UK UNGA80 Event



UNA-UK is looking for volunteers to help deliver their historic UNGA event at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, on 17th January 2026. Please register your interest [here](#).

Inspirational Group Activities

Corresponding together with key decision-makers in the lead up to the Climate Change COP [Here](#) is the description of the activities of UNA Streatham and Clapham in the lead up to the COP 30 Climate Change conference in Brazil. As you can see, they researched many aspects of Climate Change and the COP and then brought members together to write to their MPs and also to their banks, insurance companies and pension funds to press for action to reduce carbon emissions.

Promoting and implementing SDGs in a Local Community [Here](#) is the description of the activities from 2015 of UNA Canterbury in working with their local Council and wider community to implement the Sustainable Development Goals locally.

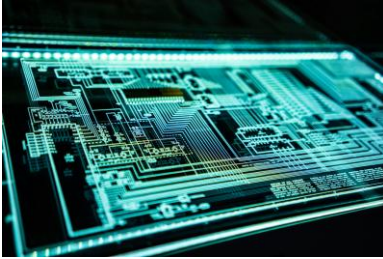
You can find descriptions of inspirational activities from other groups on [our Groups' page](#).

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. The groups can lead to further research, campaigning or other action. 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 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, have created a Local SDG Working Group to support and learn from each other. Some UNA Groups have several years' experience and have established effective local SDG committees; others are just starting. Do contact Co-Chair of UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald, [Marguerita Morton](#), if you would like to join this Working Group. The UN SDG Working Group has focused on SDG 11 *Sustainable Cities and Communities*, SDG 12, *Responsible Consumption and Production*, and SDG 13, *Climate Change*.

The SDG Forum works with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the Business Improvement District. It has participated in the Tunbridge Wells Climate Fair and, in 2026, will help to establish a Climate Hub. The UNA TWW is cooperating closely on a joint venture to ban the use of single-use plastics in order to establish a 'Plastic Free Tunbridge Wells'.

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, launched on 21st 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 on 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 the 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 and to join, please contact [Ali Hessami](#).

Systemic Transformation Network

This Working Group is being led by **Barrie Oxtoby** of UNA Shropshire and **Suheil Shahryar** of UNA Harpenden. Following the release of [UNA-UK Strategy 2026-30](#), Barrie and Suheil are offering their systemic transformation approach to UNA groups and partners to align their objectives and operational plans with the UNA-UK strategy. They would be keen to hear from interested UNA group leaders. For 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. Please [let us know](#) if you would like to make a donation.

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 **31st January, 2026**. 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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