The Laser Pulse

The Newsletter of UNA LASER

2026 Issue No. 11, November

If you have difficulty accessing any of the links in this newsletter, please email contact@unalaser.org**.**

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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

LASER is now on LinkedIn! This will widen our reach, especially to younger supporters. After 6 months, we will assess the effect, so please let us know of any results for your local groups, thematic groups, Working Groups and other activities. To see our posts and to submit a story of your UNA-related activities, please see below in our *Groups' and Members' Information and Support* section.

Along with marking this exciting beginning, this month also marks an ending, as this is my last *Pulse* as your Chair (though I shall continue to edit *Pulse* for our new Chair).

Soon after I started as Chair seven years ago, we were plunged into the pandemic. We could not go ahead with our planned UN 75 event, so we quickly learned to use link online, and realised the immense opportunities this opened up. Instead of the big single event at which people would have had to choose a workshop, we could run an online festival each evening for a week so people could attend all the workshops. And we could include speakers and participants from far away. We considered the future of the UN, how it could work on Building a More Secure World. We looked at security in health, food,

environment, economics, peace and the digital world. These workshops led to proposed Actions – for individuals, communities, nations and the international community, led by the UN. This Action Plan is still a useful reference when considering current challenges.

Since then, many groups have gone online to widen the reach of their events, both for presenters and for participants. Zoom has also enabled the establishment of our UNA Working Groups, bringing together members around the country wanting to work together on some UN-related challenge. Hybrid events can give us the advantages of both worlds; zoom-only events avoid the difficulties of providing venues. Technology has had huge benefits – but also provides challenges which several groups are addressing.

Our many achievements have been through the work of volunteers. Thank you all for the support and friendship you have given me in this post over the last 7 years; it has been an enormous pleasure and privilege to work with you.

LASER Events

LASER AGM and Presidential Address



The LASER AGM will be on **14th November** in **Bermondsey Village Hall, SE1 3TD** (very close to London Bridge station), **12:00-17:30** and on Zoom. Please register for in-person attendance here and for online attendance here.

The papers can be found here. We shall also send an email link to those who have registered. There will not

be paper copies available for everyone at the meeting.

Hot drinks and simple snacks will be available, but please bring a packed lunch.

We do not charge for attendance or for LASER membership but, to help cover the expenses, you are encouraged, please, to **make a donation when you register**. (We also encourage regular donations to LASER by those who can afford it. See end of *Pulse* for details).

Presidential Address

After lunch we will hear the inaugural Presidential Address for our President, **Sir Malcolm Evans**, eminent international lawyer and President of Regent's Park College, Oxford. At this turbulent time in international relations, he will speak on ***Reflections on International Law, the UN and the Future of Multilateralism***. There will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

The day will end with presentations from some members that might inspire our future activities.

LASER Policy Conference

Our Policy Conference will be on **Saturday February 20th, 2027**, in **Bermondsey Village Hall, SE1 3TD,** and online. Draft resolutions **of a maximum of 175 words** will need to be submitted by **9th January**. A submission form will be appearing on the resolutions page of our website shortly.

In order to make the event more manageable, focussed and relevant to our campaigning, the Policy Committee has decided to divide the resolutions into 4 sections and to select the 2 or 3 most impactful resolution from the first three sections

to create the preliminary agenda. Members and supporters will then vote to add three more resolutions to create the final agenda.

The sections are:

- the UK government's role in UN systems and international law
- the UK government's role in country- or region-specific issues
- the UK government's role in major international challenges
- other.

The draft resolutions will be circulated in mid-January, with the amendments' **deadline being 1st February**. This will also be an opportunity to amend our existing resolutions, which the Policy Committee are rationalising for the December *Pulse.* Amendments can add a **maximum of 75 words** to the length of the resolution. The final *Policy Conference Agenda* will be circulated around **15th February**.

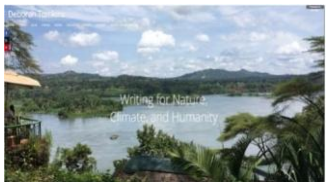
This is your chance to help decide what stance the Region should take on a wide range of international issues. Resolutions need to be on an international topic and must call for action by the UK government or the UN. The Policy Committee may also share resolutions with political party leaders and with 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.

Please do not send in resolutions or amendments longer than the limits, as this creates considerable additional work for the Policy Committee. This year we have a tighter timetable and may need to reject those that are not already the right length.



Other UNA Events

UNA Harpenden



On **7th November, 10:30** UNA Harpenden is hosting a free, hybrid public lecture on ***What has story ever done for us? Earth's climate crisis from the perspective of a prize-winning novelist*** by novelist Deborah Tomkins, at **Salvation Army,** Harpenden AL5 2TG. Please register here.

On **8th November, 10:30,** UNA Harpenden is participating in the Remembrance Day Parade and Service, starting at **Rothamsted Park, Leyton Road** and ending in Church Green, Harpenden. To participate in the parade, please register here, scrolling down to this event.

On **23rd January, 2027, 10:30** UNA Harpenden is hosting a free, hybrid public lecture on ***Be More Human*** by **Sir Norman Lamb**, Former LibDem MP, at **Salvation Army,** Harpenden AL5 2TG. Please register here, scrolling down to this event.



UNA Climate and Oceans



On 14th November, 10:00-16:00 at St Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2HE, UNA Climate and Oceans, with Sussex Dolphin Project, Sussex Underwater, Community Supporters, sponsored by Sussex Bay, will be hosting an Ocean Symposium and Marine Exhibition inspired by the UN World Oceans Day theme, ***Reimagine: Beyond the World We Know, a new Relationship with our Oceans***. Policy makers, government agencies, business leaders, non-government organisations, community representatives, scientists, educators, innovators and engaged citizens - all committed to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of our oceans – will share speeches, panel events, discussions, films, exhibitions, networking opportunities. Tickets are £8:30. You can find more information and buy tickets here.

UNA Luton

On **30th November, 18:30-29:00**, UNA Luton, with the Bangladesh Caterers' Association (BCA), is hosting a free talk and discussion webinar celebrating ***Women's Entrepreneurship Day 2026: Women Chefs enter the Bangladesh Curry Industry in the UK***. The keynote speaker is **Oli Khan** (BCA). Other speakers will include the Lord Lieutenant of Luton, the Mayor of Luton, Chair and Secretary of UNA Luton. Here is the link.

UNA Bexhill and Hastings

On **20th February, 2027, 14:00-16:00**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings is hosting a public lecture at **St. Peter's Community Centre,**

Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2HE on ***Life as a Refugee: The Work of the UN Refugee Agency*.** The speaker will be **Maria Clara, Martin**, former Director UNHCR in Greece. In the face of ignorant hostility towards them, we'll explain the difference between refugees and migrants, then tell the story about how the UNHCR deals with the millions of people each year forced to flee their homelands due to wars and persecution. Registration can be with the Chair or on the door on the day.

Campaigning

We encourage members to engage with your 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.

We encourage all readers to become members of UNA-UK. This month we are promoting two of their urgent campaigns.

Autonomous Weapons



At the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Review Conference at the UN in November, states have the opportunity to launch negotiations for an autonomous weapons treaty. 130 states back the call for such a Treaty. Concerningly, the UK is yet to support this step. Latvia – holding this month's rotating Presidency of the UN Security Council, is also focusing on this issue in its signature debate. UNA-UK asks us all to sign the petition here. Their guidance to writing to our MPs on this issue is here, with the following key asks:

- Support the start of negotiations on a legally binding treaty on autonomous weapon systems;
- Ensure that meaningful human control is kept over every decision to use force.

UK role in Election of UN Secretary-General

After 10 years in office, António Guterres will retire as Secretary-General on 31st December. It is vital that his successor should represent the wider world and unequivocally stand up for the UN Charter and international law, not being a puppet of the world's most powerful countries. The UN Security Council (who makes the choice and submits it to the General Assembly for approval) has not yet agreed on which of the current candidates to put forward. The UK is one of only five countries with a veto in the Security Council. Even though it avoids using the veto and last used it more than 30 years ago, our P5 status and responsibility means we should be prepared to use the veto if an unsuitable candidate is being promoted. As you will have seen in their November Newsletter, UNA-UK is urging us to write to our MPs to make it clear to the government the public concern that they live up to their responsibilities in this election. They have provided this template letter for us to adapt.

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.

UNA LASER is now on LinkedIn

This month we are launching UNA LASER's own page on LinkedIn. Our aim is to widen our reach and bring more people to our events, discussions and campaigns. We plan to post twice a week.

As well as material from *Pulse,* UNA and UN sources, we would like to share news from our groups and members. This could be a forthcoming event. A report on a past one, a campaigns or any other UNA-related activities.

To submit a story

1. Visit https://una-laser.nuelles.com
2. Enter your email address and click 'Send Login Code'.
3. Check your email for a short code, then type it into the box shown on the page.
4. The submission form will then open for you to fill in.

To see our posts on LinkedIn

Visit our page at https://www.linkedin.com/company/una-laser/. You can read our posts there without signing in, though LinkedIn may ask you to log in after a few posts.

If you have a LinkedIn account, please click 'Follow' on our page; our posts will then

appear in your LinkedIn feed. You can help us reach more people by clicking ‘Like’ or ‘Repost’ on anything you find interesting.

If you don’t have an account, you can create one, free of charge, at linkedin.com. You need only an email address and a password.

Videos from UNA Eastbourne’s Climate Change Imperatives Summer Council

Following its informative and thought-provoking Summer Council on *Climate Change Imperatives*, UNA Eastbourne is now sharing the highlights from their four key speakers, Prof Terry Cannon (on the COP Climate Change conferences), Ian Elgie and Gonzalo Alvaraz (on carbon sequestration – by trees and oceans, respectively), Professor Steve Sorrell (on progress towards net Zero). You can learn in this video more about UNA Eastbourne’s remarkable tree-planting project in Uganda. We can all go to UNA Eastbourne website to support this project and offset our carbon footprints.

UNA Working Groups

These Working Groups (which are also listed on the LASER website) 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.

Beyond Sovereignty

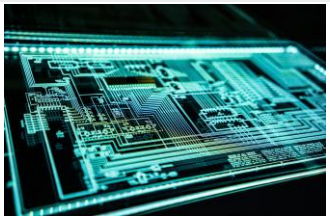


This Working Group has the objective of identifying the drivers and inhibitors of creating a safer world, including a UN that could meet the aspirations of the majority of the peoples of the world living in peace and harmony. An introductory paper entitled *Engineering a Safer World* can be found here. We welcome anyone wishing to discuss and contribute to this subject in a constructive manner. The convenor is **Suheil Shahryar**. To join the group, please register here.

UN Article 109 General Conference

Many consider that the UN Charter of 1945 (little changed over 80 years, during which our world has changed in many ways) needs revision. UN Charter Article A109-1 is the provision for a General Conference of UN Members, if approved by 2/3 of the General Assembly Members and 9 of the Security Council Members. In the UN's 80+ years history such a General Conference has never been held. The A109 Coalition, within the auspice of the Global Governance Forum (GGF), aims to mobilise UN Member States to call this General Conference at which the GGF draft Second Charter would be tabled. This new Working Group, convened by **John Crowe**, will explore how UK civil society, particularly UNA members, could promote – and respond to – the tabling of such an A109 motion. It is open to all. For further information and to get involved, please contact this group via A109@Freedomia.net.

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 all 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. The group expects 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.

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 a 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. People interested in joining this group should please contact **Suheil Shahryar**.

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

"The new UN must not be merely a stronger military institution. It must be a more accountable peace-making constitution in which authority is exercised as a duty to protect humanity, sovereignty is limited by responsibility, force is subordinate to law, and justice is not sacrificed in the name of political convenience." **Adv. Paritesh Royal**

The above quotation is indicative of how far our group has come in 'interrogating' the Second UN Charter. It has been a long journey, but our in-depth discussions

supported by factual investigation and excellent legal advice, is bringing about a very satisfying result. Next year we will embark on our final sub-topic (World Development), after which we will be ready to summarise and submit our suggestions for amendments to the Second Charter text. Peter Webster, with much appreciated, infinite patience, continues to chair our Zoom meetings on agreed Saturday afternoons at 14.30 GMT. Our last meeting for this year is on Saturday 5th December at 14.30 GMT and will be a debate on *Feminism* with reference to entries about gender in the *Second UN Charter*. For more information and to join the group, please contact Greta Vipond.

Reimagining and Exploring a UN Fit for the 21st Century

The 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 has adopted a novel research method to creatively 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. The group met fortnightly, developing and weighing eleven Driver and nine Inhibitor Influences. They then then used a dual-rooted architecture based in international law and classical Indian statecraft to develop a detailed framework for citizens to build a fairer and more ethical way for humanity to govern itself. The overview of this process is described in the Executive Summary. More detailed Volume 1 of the Working Group's Report can be seen here. For more information or to join the Working Group, please contact **Ali Hessami**.

Financial Support for LASER

LASER does not ask for subscriptions from its members or groups, nor does it charge for attendance at its events in order not to exclude anyone for financial reasons.

We therefore **welcome donations** (regular or one-off) to our Virgin Money UNA London and South East Region account. Please let us know if you want to make a

donation.

How about a monthly ‘cup-of-coffee £3.50’ in the form of a standing order? Please let us know of any donations or if you would like help in setting this up.

The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **noon on 6th December**. While *Pulse* usually goes out in the first week of each month, we suggest that events are initially publicised over a month ahead, as the *Pulse* mailing date may have to be varied to fit in with other constraints. Please keep announcements short and, for forthcoming events, include all the information requested in the *Pulse* template. We welcome pictures, but please ensure that any pictures you send are not copyright-protected, because 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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