

THE FUTURE WE WANT, THE UN WE NEED



United Nations Association - UK Strategic Plan

July 2021 to June 2024

SUMMARY

2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in 1945. Born from the ashes of war, the UN is often romanticised as a product of global idealism – representing the hopes of war-weary populations for a better future. But it was also a hard-nosed response by wartime leaders, who recognised that the security and welfare of their citizens were better secured through cooperation and compromise, than rivalry and war.

Unprecedented global pain and suffering led to this realisation. What will it take today? There is certainly no shortage of global catastrophic risks, from the climate crisis and environmental destruction to nuclear weapons and pandemics.

COVID-19 has shown how quickly decades of progress can be reversed: poverty is increasing, inequalities are deepening, and there is growing disconnect with governments and institutions. It has also exposed how flawed and fragile our societies and economies are, including our global system. Meanwhile, conflicts continue unabated, and violence and human rights violations are on the rise. Rather than uniting to tackle the challenges we face, too many of us remain divided – at the local, national and global level.

As we seek to recover from this crisis, we cannot aspire to return to normal, because 'normal' was not working for most of the world's people. We must recognise that none of us have the luxury of ignoring the plight of others, either on our doorstep or in far-away places.

Today, solidarity is essential to our self-interest and survival, even more so than it was in 1945. We must support those hardest hit by this crisis, and address the long-standing issues that have made them vulnerable. We must ensure that the decisions we take in the coming months and years help, not hinder, our shared vision of a safer, fairer and more sustainable world.

The pandemic has shown that we need everyone – people, business, research, civil society, local and national governments, and global institutions – to pull together. It has also proved that huge transformations are possible if there is political will and public support, backed by evidence and finance.

Over the next three years, UNA-UK will play its part through three programmes:

- **The future we want** – through outreach and communications, we will engage people in the UK and beyond in building a better future for all, and empower them to address the challenges we face
- **The UN we need** – through research and campaigns, we will generate momentum to make our global institutions more able to achieve this vision, as well as more open, inclusive and accountable to the people they serve
- **The UK's role** – through advocacy and engagement, we will encourage our country to lead by example, making the case for global solidarity and cooperation, at home and abroad, and backing it up with concrete actions

As we emerge from a period of turbulence and hardship, let us work together to make this our turning point for a better future for all.

1. VISION, MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Our manifesto

- 1.1 This document updates the strategic plan created in October 2019, in light of the major changes resulting from COVID-19 to our lives, our work and the challenges we face. It seeks to adapt our mission to the ongoing uncertainty - domestically and globally - and to simplify our programmes so that we can be more effective in this turbulent environment.
- 1.2 Founded in 1945, UNA-UK is the only British charity dedicated to the United Nations. We believe that the UN is an indispensable tool for building a better world. The challenges we face cannot be solved by one country – or even by countries – alone. They require global solutions and action by all parts of society.
- 1.3 COVID-19 has made painfully clear how connected we are. So too are the challenges we face. Poverty, inequality and gender-based violence have all worsened as a result of the pandemic, as has our capacity to respond to other pressing challenges. We also know that the severe disruption and loss of life we experienced in 2020 is only a foretaste of what is to come if we do not take action now to address the climate emergency and environmental degradation.
- 1.4 Our ability to overcome these challenges depends on solidarity and cooperation across borders, sectors and generations. It also depends on our willingness to address longstanding inequalities and injustices in our societies, economies and institutions – which affect both the impact of crises and our response.
- 1.5 We cannot continue as we have or aspire to return to normal. That would entail accepting that large swathes of the human family continue to be stymied by a system that has never worked for them. It would mean accepting that billions across the globe contend with violence, discrimination and deprivation on a daily basis – their fortunes worsening at the expense of others.
- 1.6 This document, therefore, is a manifesto for turning things around, for building forward, not back. That was the vision of the founders of the United Nations 75 years ago, and it is the UN's rallying cry today. Member States adopted a declaration to mark the 75th anniversary, "The Future We Want, the UN We Need", that calls for action to build a better future, and a United Nations more able to deliver it. The Secretary-General, who is tasked with taking forward the declaration, has set out a powerful vision for a new social contract, a new global deal and more networked and inclusive global cooperation.

Our track record

- 1.7 UNA-UK is well-placed to champion these efforts in the UK and beyond. We have a strong track record of making the UN more open, inclusive and accessible. Through our 1 for 7 Billion campaign, we helped to transform how the UN selects its chief. Through our Together First initiative, we ensured that the UN's 75th anniversary was not just a tick-box exercise, but paved the way for a new vision and transformation of the organisation. We also crowdsourced proposals to support transformation, from strengthening the organisation's peacebuilding work to appointing a UN civil society champion.
- 1.8 In the UK, UNA-UK has been the foremost advocate for the UN for the past 75 years. We have worked with successive governments, parliamentarians, civil society and the public on issues ranging from increased UK support to UN peacekeeping to teaching about the UN in schools, the adoption of life-saving treaties on cluster munitions and nuclear disarmament, and reform of the United Nations.
- 1.9 None of these successes would have been possible without our grassroots network in the UK and across the world. We firmly believe that public knowledge, support and action are vital if we are to achieve the huge transformations we need to build a better future for all.

Our objectives

1.10 Over the next three years, our three objectives – and programmes – will draw on these strengths, with the aim of achieving significant progress towards the future we want and the UN we need by leveraging opportunities such as the follow-up process to the 75th anniversary and COP26 climate conference to be held in Glasgow in 2021:

- **The future we want** – through outreach and communications, we will engage and empower people in the UK and beyond to build a better future for all
- **The UN we need** – through research and campaigns, we will create momentum to make our global institutions more effective, open, inclusive and accountable
- **The UK's role** – through advocacy and engagement, we will encourage our country to lead by example, making the case for global solidarity and cooperation, at home and abroad

1.11 By June 2024, we hope to have inspired:

- People from all walks of life to campaign for policies that put people and planet first, and to take steps towards that goal - as individuals, communities and organisations
- A transformative follow-up process to the UN's 75th anniversary declaration that will bring us closer to the UN we need
- Progress on at least one of our proposals for strengthening the UN, such as a high-level champion for civil society
- An inclusive COP26 that generates meaningful action on the climate emergency
- The development of a UK strategy for strengthening the UN, as well as concrete UK support - financial, political and practical - for the Organisation's work

Our theory of change

1.12 The above goals are important ends in themselves. They are also interrelated. Informed and empowered citizens are more likely to put pressure on governments to provide vision and leadership, at home and on the international stage. This in turn contributes to a more effective UN, benefiting all people, everywhere.

1.13 We have different ways of working towards these goals. Our advocacy work resembles that of campaigning organisations, as we seek to influence policy-shapers through our formal routes (e.g. consultations) and informal routes (e.g. our parliamentary and media work). Our outreach activities encompass education, training and capacity-building – equipping individuals and organisations to understand the UN, engage with it and contribute to its goals. Our communications and campaigning connect these two strands, from supporting better reporting on the UN to building community activism.

1.15 We derive great strength from our grassroots base. From local UNA groups in this country to civil society partners across the world, people from all walks of life share our vision of principled global action and their efforts amplify our activities. Meanwhile our network of UN experts and practitioners - from former diplomats to parliamentarians, academics and journalists – adds rigor and scrutiny to our work.

Our commitment

1.14 We will strive to “walk the talk” in all that we do. Over the next three years, this will include:

- **Reaching “carbon neutral” by 2025:** building on Environmental Policy and changes made in response to COVID-19, we will make online events and communications our default option - with physical outputs produced only for compelling reasons. We will review the environmental impact of our premises, investments, products and services and plan to move to sustainable cloud-based servers. We will also identify nature-based options for offsetting carbon.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion:** we will uphold the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights We will strive to ensure our organisation, networks, events and publications reflect diversity in all its forms and champion lesser-heard voices. Specifically, we will not organise, support or participate in all-male panels. We will strive to improve our communications and outreach to be more accessible to those with disabilities, as well as to the general public. This will include refreshing the UNA-UK website, seeking advice on producing materials in different formats, and exploring ways to ensure that financial hardship is not a barrier to engaging with us.
- **Investing in the future:** we are fortunate to find ourselves in a period of financial security as a result of strong fundraising and financial management in recent years. However, our income streams are likely to be impacted by COVID-19, including events, publications and premises. We will therefore focus on securing grants, with an emphasis on multi-year core support. In parallel, we will explore how best to transform our other income streams in light of the current turbulent environment. This will include more emphasis on donations and legacies. We will focus more on learning from young people and social movements.
- **Kindness and compassion:** we will act with kindness and be driven by empathy and compassion. In these challenging times, our default approach to our staff and volunteers will be one of flexibility, being sensitive to their needs, treating them as individuals, and offering opportunities for development. We will strive to meet – and exceed – best practice in our organisational arrangements, so that UNA-UK is ahead of the curve in this period of change to the world of work. And we will seek opportunities to support causes which are making positive change, through actively engaging with local communities and organisations.

Action to achieve our vision for the world

The future we want

Climate Action, Sustainable Development and Global Health

We need global cooperation like never before – across borders, sectors and generations. That is the only way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our roadmap for a better future for all.

The global pandemic has shed a harsh light on the urgent need for a global new deal - in which global public goods are no longer reserved for the few and in which our common future is prioritised ahead of short-term profits. For too long our global financial systems have been left unchecked, reinforcing unsustainable policies and practices that have driven our world to the brink of an irreversible climate catastrophe. The vast inequalities among and between countries and communities has been laid bare by Covid-19, reminding us that those most vulnerable, and least complicit, are disproportionately affected by climate change. However, there is still time to act: we know that complacency is deadly and as the global community aims to build back better, we must do our part to ensure that we do not return to the “normal” that has brought us to this tipping point.

UNA-UK will work to mobilise people from all walks of life to campaign for policies that put people and planet first, and to take steps towards that goal - as individuals, communities and organisations.

Climate Action:

The world is falling dangerously short of meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement. Through publishing analysis and recommendations from world leading experts, UNA-UK will promote tangible actions for the global community to take.

Drawing on our UN policy, communications and grassroots networks, UNA-UK will campaign and encourage the UK government to make COP26 the most accessible, inclusive and action orientated COP to date.

UNA-UK will continue to amplify the voices of experts and activists - including our partners in the UK Climate Coalition - and we will work to expand and diversify our pool of climate advisers, so that our communications reflect the concerns of the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Global Health:

COVID-19 has made discussions on global health cooperation more urgent - from strengthening existing institutions such as the World Health Organization to creating new mechanisms that increase our ability to manage risks. Building on our track record in global governance reform, UNA-UK will seek partners and work with experts in the area to advance discussions on how global health governance can be strengthened and support campaigns to make universal health care a reality.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

As calls grow for a new global deal, we will work to ensure that policies that emerge are in line with the SDGs and support a step change in ambition. This will see us join forces with partners in the UK and beyond to monitor the UK's record, to support greater inclusion of stakeholders in delivering the SDGs, and to help spread awareness of the Goals and their crucial role in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UN we need

UNA-UK co-founded Together First in 2018 to promote tangible steps towards building the global system we need to tackle catastrophic risks. Our network has since grown to 200+ organisations worldwide, as well as academics; former diplomats and policymakers; youth leaders and innovators committed to creating a global system that is effective, equitable, open, inclusive and capable of ongoing renewal.

Throughout 2020, Together First carried out consultations to bring new voices into conversations on global governance and identify concrete, feasible solutions to risks such as the climate crisis and nuclear weapons. The top 10 ideas were circulated to world leaders in September 2020, in the report produced by the UN to mark its 75th anniversary: "The Future We Want, The UN We Need". 2021 will see us go on campaign footing to make progress on implementing these proposals, from installing a civil society champion at the UN to banning lethal autonomous weapons.

We have also re-launched our work on merit-based senior UN appointments - including our 1 for 7 Billion campaign on the selection of the Secretary-General, as the incumbent approaches the end of his first term. We will continue to act as a hub for this issue to consolidate progress made to date, and to call for further action to improve leadership across the UN system.

And we are supporting the follow-up process to UN75, which seeks to turn the priorities emerging from the global consultation in 2020 into a plan of action by the Secretary-General, to be published in September 2021. We will work closely with those leading the UN's outreach, with a view to supporting an inclusive and action-oriented process. We will call on Member States to support the Secretary-General's vision and to champion the ideas that emerge.

The UK's role

COVID-19 has made painfully clear how interconnected we are - today, solidarity and self-interest are one and the same. From pandemics to climate change, security to commerce, the challenges we face cannot be neatly divided into "domestic" and "international". They all require cooperation across borders, sectors and generations.

The UK has played a key role at the United Nations from its earliest days, helping to create and shape the organisation. At a time when our international system is under unprecedented strain, UNA-UK will support UK leadership on climate action, peace and security, poverty and inequality and human rights - at home and abroad. We want the UK to lead by example, and adopt a joined-up approach to foreign policy with human security at its core and future generations in focus. We also want the UK to champion global governance transformation, especially steps to make the UN more open, inclusive, effective and accountable to the people it serves.

As the UK undergoes a period of profound change to its foreign policy, UNA-UK will call for the creation of a cross-departmental strategy for the UN. We will also support greater public outreach and engagement on global issues, with the objective of developing a whole-of-society approach to the UK's most pressing challenges.

We will work with partners to campaign for leadership at COP26 which goes beyond the headline net zero target, challenging the UK to respond to harder questions such as those around fossil fuels subsidies and embodied emissions in global supply chains. Along with the Climate Coalition and our grassroots networks, we will encourage the UK to raise its ambition and ensure more transparent and accessible reporting on climate targets.

We will maintain our focus on arms control, urging the government to end its profit-above-human rights approach to arms exports which has fuelled violence in Yemen and elsewhere, and address the growing threat from AI weapons by supporting a global prohibition on lethal autonomous weapons. Our longstanding commitment to nuclear disarmament will continue, capitalising on the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and making the case for the UK to engage with this treaty as a legitimate part of the rules-based international system.

We will encourage the UK to enhance its commitment to UN Peacekeeping, including through the provision of troops. We will also champion a people-centred approach to peace operations, using local networks to inform missions. And we will continue to campaign for the promise of "never again" to become a reality, with international action to prevent genocide and other mass atrocities, and secure justice for survivors. This includes our role on the UK Working Group on Atrocity Prevention, which has long urged the UK to adopt an integrated approach to atrocity prevention.

Outreach

Grassroots engagement

In 2020, we identified four key areas to enhance our grassroots engagement over the next three years:

1. **Sustainability** - We aim to enhance the sustainability of our grassroots engagement arrangements, both for our UNA Groups network and UNA-UK office.
2. **Simplification** - We aim to simplify the current administration requirements, increasing resources available for grassroots engagement.
3. **Inclusivity** - We aim to remove existing barriers to engagement, making our grassroots more inclusive and recognising the varied contributions made to the collective work of UNA-UK.
4. **Representation** - We aim to improve representation, ensuring we value and engage with our grassroots equally.

Since UNA-UK initiated a review into our engagement structures, a collaborative process has been underway to develop a proposal to deliver on the key aims identified above. Over the next strategic period UNA-UK will develop and implement an operational plan to transition from our existing arrangements and enhance our grassroots engagement.

Events and communications

Our mission relies on effective communications. From succinct recommendations for government action to teaching materials for primary schools and toolkits to engage a range of stakeholders - we need to make complex issues accessible and to ensure that our calls to action are engaging. UNA-UK has established itself as the go-to resource for UK and global stakeholders invested and interested in the UN and international forums. Our aim is to fully integrate UNA-UK communications channels, ensure our digital, print and event outputs are dynamic and engaging and promote our mission to inform and advocate.

The recent shift toward online events presents an opportunity for UNA-UK to widen and enhance its outreach by reducing financial and geographic barriers, whilst lowering our carbon footprint. We will reinvigorate our programme of events, placing greater focus on securing international speakers, facilitating discussions across borders and including lesser-heard voices.

We will seek to use our events more strategically to share our message and influence UK and UN policy. We will also explore ways to enhance participation and to adapt formats such as roundtables, panel discussions and campaign meetings to the digital context. We will also increase our support for online initiatives of our UNA Groups with a view to increasing their reach as well as our local impact.

Similarly, we will move towards digital-only output for our publications, with a view to making our communications more accessible in all senses of the word. This will include producing more visual and social content, and updating our website to make it more user-friendly and action-focussed. As with our events, we will use our website to amplify the voices of those who are marginalised. And we will strive to make it an open door to our organisation, with easy-to-find information on our work, objectives, outcomes and funders.

Action to achieve our vision for UNA-UK

Our commitment - we will strive to “walk the talk” in all that we do.

Climate and environmental destruction

Building on our Environmental Policy and recent changes made due to COVID-19, UNA-UK wants to be a ‘carbon neutral’ charity by 2025:

- Making virtual events, meetings and materials the default option, and any physical alternatives will be produced only when there are compelling reasons to do so and with an impact assessment.
- Identifying sustainable forms of carbon offsetting to reach our goal of becoming a carbon neutral organisation
- Completing the transition to paperless communications, continuing to offer postal communications for a fee so as to remain accessible to those without online access but encouraging digital correspondence wherever possible, and identifying ways to offset environmental impact of any postal communications;
- Decreasing energy consumption, through actions including installation of LED lighting throughout premises and a move towards a green energy supplier;
- Reviewing suppliers’ environmental policies and move towards eco-friendly suppliers wherever possible;
- Working with staff to support them in making environmentally-friendly decisions where possible in relation to their work, for example minimising their time in the office to reduce transport emissions and hosting digital meetings where possible;
- Improving transparency with regards to our actions as an organisation to negate climate and environmental destruction;
- Capitalising on climate-based events, e.g. COP26, to promote climate-considered action amongst our networks and grassroots supporters;
- Exploring ways to measure and monitor our energy consumption, ensuring we are making improvements and offsetting those that we cannot make positive change.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- We will seek to partner with a range of organisations nationally and internationally, to expand our reach and ensure that our work is informed by a variety of perspectives
- We will ensure events and publications are promoted across a variety of platforms to reach wide and diverse audiences, and seek to ensure that participants represent a variety of demographics. Specifically, we will not organise, support or participate in all male panels.
- We will strive to improve our communications and outreach to be more accessible to those with disabilities, as well as the rest of the general public. This will include refreshing the UNA-UK website, seeking advice on producing materials in different formats, and exploring ways to ensure that financial hardship is not a barrier to engaging with us.
- In refreshing the UNA-UK website, we will strive to ensure improvements are accessible to those with disabilities, considering those with visual or audible disabilities throughout development.
- The membership structure review will be completed with a view to ensure our member base is inclusive of all persons, regardless of geographical location, race, gender, sexuality, or financial status.
- We will explore ways to monitor and report on the diversity of our membership and supporter base; event participation; consultants; and publication authors, whilst ensuring data is stored in line with existing regulations.
- When appropriate, we will express support to those campaigns and movements which are supportive of diversity, inclusion and equality.
- We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind towards an individual or groups of persons; any such discrimination will be met with serious consequences and UNA-UK will cease to cooperate with any such perpetrator.

Investing in the future

We are fortunate to find ourselves in a period of financial security, due to actions taken over the past few years. However, many of our income streams are likely to be impacted adversely by COVID-19, particularly events, publications and premises.

- We will focus on securing grants, with an emphasis on seeking multi-year core support to assist with longer-term projections, project and campaign management, and staff security.
- We will explore ways to generate income through virtual events, with aim to host a mixture of free and ticketed events, placing emphasis on encouraging donations at all functions.
- In light of the changes to the working environment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we will review the use of our premises to maximise income and respond to the demand for office space.
- We will source partnerships with organisations who share our goals and vision, to launch successful fundraising campaigns and capitalise on a wider network.
- We will ensure that all organisations are adequately investigated through a thorough due diligence check before entering into a partnership, to ensure that their goals are consistent with ours, particularly in terms of equality, diversity, climate and environmental destruction.
- We will intensify our efforts to engage young people from all backgrounds and to work with - and learn from - social movements on climate and racial justice in particular.

Kindness and Compassion

Staff are UNA-UK's most valuable resource.

- We will act with kindness towards our staff, volunteers and those within our wider networks, seeking to uphold the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- We will offer flexibility to our staff so that they can practice a healthy work-life balance, and ensure each individual can maximise the use of their working time, and work to their best ability.
- Staff development will be reviewed on a regular basis, so that opportunities for enrichment and advancement are identified and utilised, strengthening both the individual's and the team's capabilities.
- The team ethos will be one of openness and inclusivity, where individuals feel confident and comfortable sharing ideas without fear of judgement and can ask for support when needed.
- We will seek to support causes which are encouraging positive change, through identifying opportunities to engage with local communities and organisations, for example using staff social events to give back to those in need.