

# New World



News and comment on the UN & UNA-UK

Spring 2013 // £3.00



**WITH** [Liu Xiaoming](#) on China and the UN / [Noel Sharkey](#) on drones / [Gillian Briggs](#) on women's day / [Jonathan Hutson](#) on humanitarian tools / [David Nally](#) and [Bhaskar Vira](#) on agro-biotechnology / [Raúl Zambrano](#) on ICT for development



Woman uses solar cooker to  
prepare food in Bandiagara, Mali  
© Joerg Boethling/Alamy

**UNA-UK is the UK's  
leading source of  
independent analysis  
on the United Nations and  
a grassroots movement  
campaigning for a  
safer, fairer and more  
sustainable world**

Together with our members  
and supporters, we:

- Connect people in the UK and beyond with the work and values of the UN
- Influence decision-makers and opinion-shapers to promote UN goals
- Stimulate debate and action on ways to make the UN more effective



**UNA-UK**

To find out more and to become a member, visit [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)



## This issue's contributors



**Gillian Briggs**  
Secretary, UNA  
Birmingham branch



**Natalie Chindipha**  
UNA Youth Intern



**Jonathan Hutson**  
Director of Communications,  
Enough Project



**David Nally**  
Senior Lecturer, Human  
Geography, University of  
Cambridge



**Noel Sharkey**  
Professor, Artificial  
Intelligence and Robotics,  
University of Sheffield



**Bhaskar Vira**  
Senior Lecturer, Environment  
and Development, University  
of Cambridge



**Liu Xiaoming**  
Ambassador of the People's  
Republic of China to the UK



**Raúl Zambrano**  
Senior Policy Advisor, ICT,  
UN Development Programme

### UNA-UK

3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL / [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

The United Nations Association - UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee (no. 1146016)

**Chairman** - Sir Jeremy Greenstock

**Acting Executive Director** - Natalie Samarasinghe

**Deputy Director (Finance & Governance)** -

Carol Hodson

**Membership & Business Development Manager**

- Rich Nelmes

**Peace & Security Programmes Manager**

- James Kearney

**Communications & Campaigns Officer** - Ben Donaldson

**Policy & Advocacy Officer** - Hayley Richardson

**Responsibility to Protect Officer** - Alexandra Buskie

New World is published by UNA-UK

**Editors** - Natalie Samarasinghe, Hayley Richardson

**Sub-editors** - Cormac Bakewell, Tom Hampson, Soapbox

**Advertising** - [samarasinghe@una.org.uk](mailto:samarasinghe@una.org.uk)

The deadline for submission of material for the next issue of New World is noon on 7 June 2013. All submissions should be typed and sent by email where possible. Photos should ideally be 300dpi resolution. The next issue will cover the period July to September 2013.

**Subscription**

Copies of New World are included in the membership fee for UNA-UK



Designed by Soapbox  
[www.soapbox.co.uk](http://www.soapbox.co.uk)

This issue of New World is printed using vegetable-based inks on 100% recycled chlorine- and acid-free paper. When you are finished with the magazine, please recycle it or, better yet, pass it on to a friend.

## Contents



© Noah Seelam/AFP/Getty Images

*"The expansion of mobile networks provides a unique and unparalleled opportunity to give rural smallholders access to information that could transform their livelihoods."*

*World Bank, 'Maximizing Mobile' report, 2012*

- 4 Editorial**  
Natalie Samarasinghe and Jeremy Greenstock
- 6 In brief**
- 8 Opinion**  
**Prohibiting drones**  
Noel Sharkey on banning fully autonomous weapon systems
- 10 Opinion**  
**Optimising the humanitarian toolbox**  
Jonathan Hutson on using satellites to protect civilians
- 12 Interview**  
**Liu Xiaoming on China and the UN**  
New World speaks to China's UN ambassador about development, security and UN reform
- 14 Cover story**  
**Can technology save the world?**  
Eight inspiring inventions with the potential to improve the lives of millions of people
- 16 Feature**  
**Global innovation engine**  
Can technological advances in China boost the world's risk resilience?
- 18 Opinion**  
**Harnessing mobile technology**  
Raúl Zambrano on ICTs and the Millennium Development Goals
- 19 Opinion**  
**Food security after 2015**  
Bhaskar Vira and David Nally on the role of biotechnology
- 20 The UN & the UK**  
Arms Trade Treaty, the UN in Parliament and UNA-UK policy activities
- 22 Correspondence**  
Responses to 'After the Spring' and information on UNA-UK's 2013 Annual General Meeting
- 24 UNA-UK Members**  
**International Women's Day**  
Gillian Briggs on UNA Birmingham's celebrations
- 25 UNA Youth**  
**Nuclear disarmament**  
Natalie Chindipha on the 2013 Youth Conference
- 26 Generation United Nations**  
Help us inspire future UN enthusiasts



### Enabling innovation

**Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK's Acting Executive Director, on using technology wisely**

As *New World* goes to press, UNA-UK is celebrating the UN General Assembly's adoption of an arms trade treaty. Agreed by an overwhelming majority of UN member states, the treaty will regulate international transfers of conventional weapons, estimated to be worth around \$70bn a year. While it does not incorporate all the provisions we campaigned for – on scope and reporting for example – the treaty prohibits transfers that risk arms being used to commit egregious abuses, making it harder for despots to acquire deadly weapons. After nearly 20 years of lobbying, we are delighted to have played a part in securing this lifesaving agreement.

Throughout the process, UNA-UK and its partners pushed for the treaty to cover as wide a range of weapons as possible. This involved, to the distaste of many campaigners, breaking bread with arms industry representatives, to seek their support and advice on whether the weapons included in the draft text matched today's technological realities. Indeed, along with swift ratification, we will need to call for regular updating of this list. At present, it excludes drones for instance, which, as Noel Sharkey outlines on page 8, pose far-reaching challenges to international humanitarian law.

While Professor Sharkey believes that drones, like landmines, require an outright ban, others point to their reconnaissance utility and potential to reduce civilian casualties. The argument reflects the central challenge of regulating new technologies: balancing hypothetical gains with risks that have not been fully explored.

On page 10, Jonathan Hutson highlights the role of satellite imagery in documenting atrocities, but cautions that such technology has also been used to help commit them. As Bhaskar Vira and David Nally conclude in their article on using biotechnology in food production, there is no such thing as “apolitical technology”.

Emerging technologies require sound policies to guide application and ensure

Assault rifle parts made by gun enthusiast Travis Lerol using a 3D printer at his home in the United States. 3D printing is set to revolutionise manufacturing. Its application encompasses everything from medical implants to shoes, batteries to mobile phones. In February, a research team in Edinburgh published a paper on a printer capable of printing human stem cells

© Jahi Chikwendiu/The Washington Post via Getty Images



protection. To achieve this, governments must work at the local and international levels. Raúl Zambrano is right to point out that developing-country innovators are leading the way in finding locally appropriate solutions (page 18). However, these are often hard to replicate and scale up. UN agencies can help nurture their development and share information and lessons learnt.

Above all, there must be an enabling environment for inventiveness. This should include sensible immigration policies for scientists and engineers, as well as targeted support for least-developed countries, which are home to just 0.5% of the world's researchers. Funding for “blue-sky” research is also necessary.

Breakthroughs are often unexpected, arising from projects that appear to have

no clear practical application. Lasers, for instance, began life as a scientific curiosity. Now they are used in homes, offices and hospitals. There are dozens of cutting-edge developments we could have featured in our cover story (pages 14–15), from nanoparticle paint that turns any surface into a solar panel to three-dimensional “printing” of organ tissue.

Investment in science and technology must not suffer unduly from austerity measures. The most significant challenges facing us today – climate, food and fuel, demography and security – all require scientists and innovators to work with policy-makers, industry and the public.

Technology alone will not save the world, but coupled with fair, long-sighted policies, it can take us some way along the road. ●





## Can technology fill the gap?

**Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK's Chairman,  
on whether scientific progress can make up  
for political deficiencies**

This edition of *New World* addresses the relationship between the development of new technologies and the creation of a better world for all its inhabitants. Not only are these diverse articles interesting in their own right, they also raise the general question of whether scientific progress can make up for deficient political decision-making. It is all too probable that the problems we share at the global level – in the security, resource and environmental fields – will not be remedied by good policy prescriptions alone.

Why not? In resource use, governance, conflict resolution and progress towards decent living standards, policies that could deal with most of the trouble that is brewing in the international arena can be, and have been, devised. But agreeing and implementing them feels like a remote prospect.

On issues that require far-reaching compromises, nationalistic and short-term preferences tend to dominate. Advanced democracies have shown themselves deficient in international altruism and longer-term strategic thinking. Less advanced countries, whether democracies or not, lack the capacity or the goodwill to take the lead, for understandable reasons. It increasingly seems, as the third millennium evolves, that we must adapt to the likelihood that environmental, health, security and resource problems, not to mention ethical ones, will persist at a highly threatening level.

Can science and technology help to fill the gap in political far-sightedness? Technological development has transformed human existence, at least for a majority of the earth's population, with the rate of progress surging during the industrial revolution. Its speed never stops increasing. Yet the 20<sup>th</sup> century showed us that this did not prevent catastrophic breakdowns in international peace and stability. And most new technologies have double edges: they can promote huge benefits or be used malignantly or dangerously.

Nuclear technology and GM crops are clear examples. What a dramatic step forward it would be if nuclear fusion could be used safely, or if agricultural yields could be vastly multiplied. Advanced monitoring and transparency systems could transform the implementation of human rights norms; and automated weaponry, if used solely for defensive and policing purposes, could take the blood out of military effectiveness.

Greater understanding of genetics and micro-organisms is already changing the nature of medicine. What a bright world it could be!

***The problems we share will  
not be remedied by good  
policy prescriptions alone***

Yet each of these developments could be used to magnify the repressive power of governments or to create new instruments of harm. For all the euphemistic correctness in ministries of "defence", no security system spurns the construction of offensive capability. Technology itself, in the electronic, nanotechnology and cyber fields, has become an instrument of military power. There are some benign areas, as in conservation, transparency, agricultural efficiency and electric power. But the whole advance of science and technology requires a context of effective regulation and supervision, as well as international co-operation.

So good politics remains essential. We certainly have to avoid the complacent thought that technology will save us where policymaking cannot. The right use of scientific progress depends on good policy decisions, and only time will tell whether it will help us move towards a more civilised world. All the more reason, then, to lobby vigorously for the right policy choices. That will never stop mattering. ●

### **New World online**

UNA-UK's now has a dedicated mini-site featuring all the content from the print issue as well as a host of web-exclusive articles and opportunities for readers to engage with us.



Web content is flagged in the magazine with this symbol.

As always, we welcome your thoughts, comments and suggestions. Email the editor on [samarasinghe@una.org.uk](mailto:samarasinghe@una.org.uk)

*New World* – required reading for global citizens from all walks of life.

[www.una.org.uk/new\\_world](http://www.una.org.uk/new_world)

---

## In brief

---

### ● UN expert launches drone inquiry

In January, Ben Emmerson QC, the UN's independent expert on counter-terrorism and human rights, launched an inquiry into drone strikes and other targeted killings, saying the "exponential" rise in drone use required a proper legal framework to be put in place. Proponents argue that drones minimise civilian casualties, a claim disputed by critics. The inquiry will examine the number of civilian deaths, the intended targets and the legality of strikes in areas where there is no recognised conflict. See page 8.

---

### ● Mines threaten displaced Yemenis

The UN is stepping up efforts to clear landmines in Yemen, where unexploded devices continue to take lives and impede the return of some 140,000 people displaced by fighting in 2011. According to the UN Mine Action Service, modern mines are smaller and significantly harder to find, and their design is often attractive to children. It is currently working on improving detection and mechanical clearance technology. Worldwide, an estimated 15,000-20,000 mine-related deaths occur each year.

---

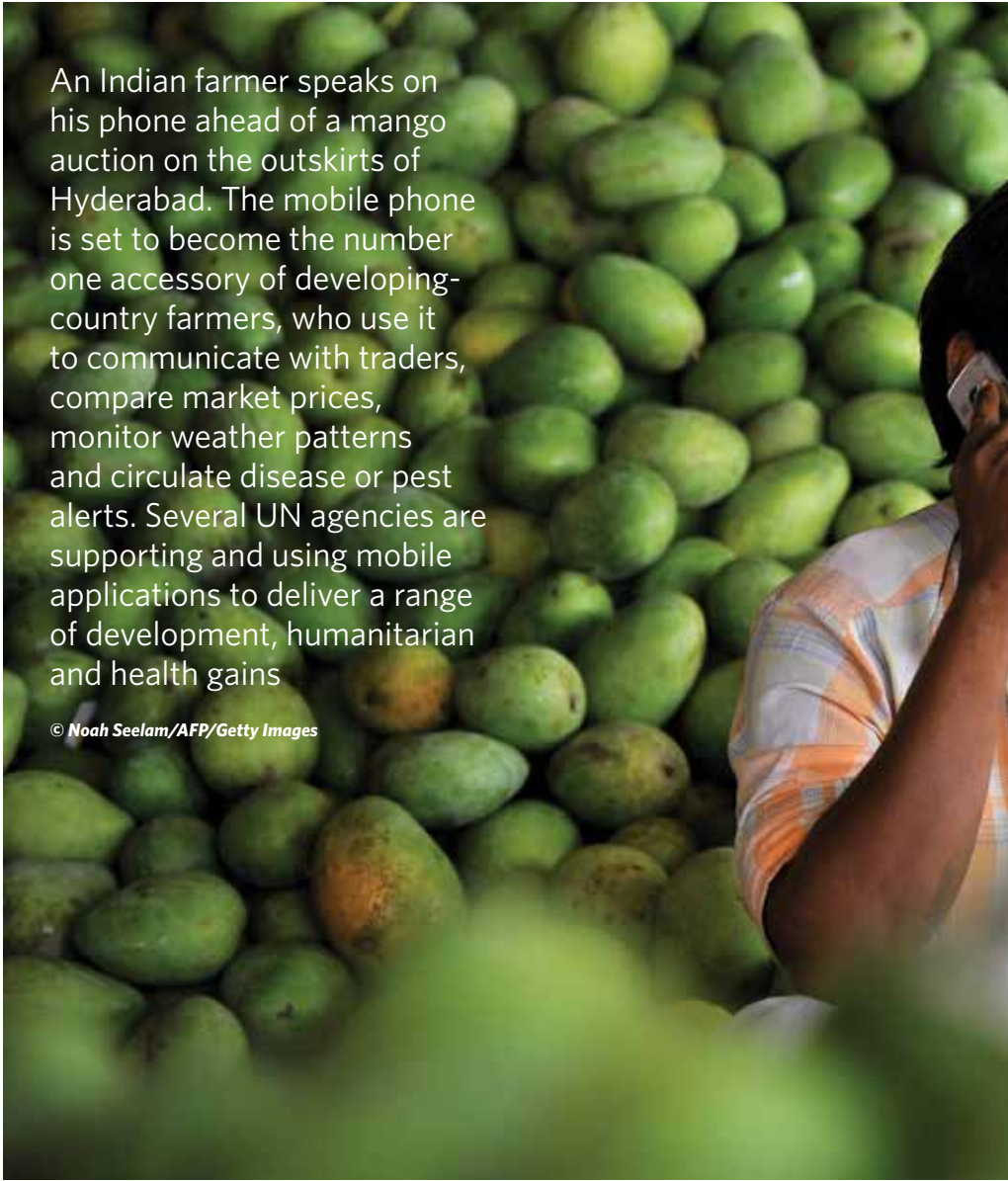
### ● Meteor crash prompts UN warning

After meteor debris injured over 1,000 people in Russia in February, on the same day a large asteroid passed within 27,000km of the earth, the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs reiterated the need for international coordination on tracking space objects. The proposed Asteroid Warning Network would connect agencies around the world to generate early warnings of potential impacts and coordinate disaster mitigation.

---

### ● Marine conservation breakthrough

In February, following several years of negotiations, member countries of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) agreed voluntary guidelines to curb illegal, unreported and unregulated



An Indian farmer speaks on his phone ahead of a mango auction on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The mobile phone is set to become the number one accessory of developing-country farmers, who use it to communicate with traders, compare market prices, monitor weather patterns and circulate disease or pest alerts. Several UN agencies are supporting and using mobile applications to deliver a range of development, humanitarian and health gains

© Noah Seelam/AFP/Getty Images

fishing. The FAO will support countries needing to improve surveillance of vessels and regulatory frameworks. It is also backing a free mobile application called AppliFish, which enables consumers to check the sustainability of their purchases. Some 30% of global fish stocks are considered overexploited.

---

### ● Energy poverty risks lives

According to the 2013 'Poor People's Energy Outlook', published by the NGO Practical Action, energy poverty has left millions of people around the world without adequate healthcare or schooling. In India nearly half of all health facilities have no electricity. In sub-Saharan Africa, just 35% of schools have access to power. The NGO is currently working with UN agencies to ensure the UN's 'Sustainable Energy for All' initiative addresses critical community services, as well as domestic and business energy use.

---

*"I studied at night by a dim and smoky oil lamp. Only when I prepared for examinations was I allowed to use a candle. Candles were considered too expensive to use for ordinary homework"*

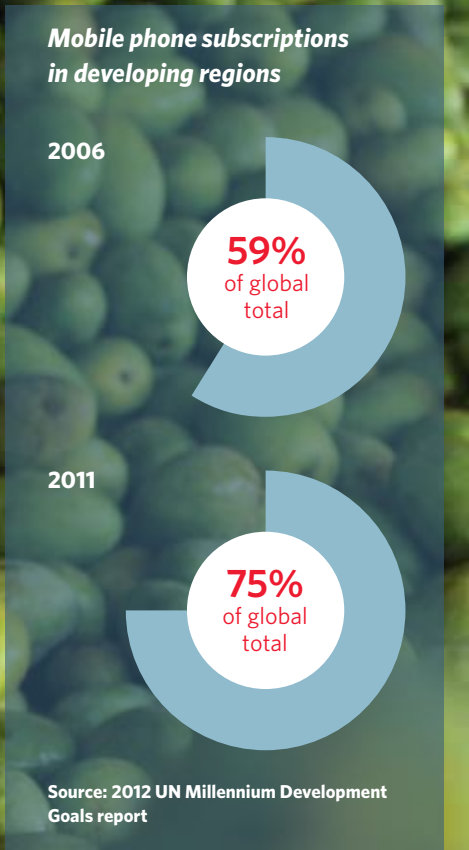
*UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on growing up with no electricity in post-war South Korea*

---

### ● Climate technology centre launched

In February, a consortium of UN agencies led by the UN Environment Programme





opened a major climate technology centre in Kenya. The centre will support new products and techniques that can help tackle climate change, as well as explore methods to speed up technology transfer to developing countries.



**The Solar Suitcase - a portable solar-powered medical kit providing light, a heart rate monitor and other basic equipment, developed by We Care Solar, a US-based non-profit organisation.**  
© We Care Solar, www.wecaresolar.org

● **Leap forward in HIV treatment**

In March, US doctors reported the first documented case of curing a child born with HIV. Around 2.1 million children worldwide have been diagnosed with HIV, over 90% through transmission from their mother. In this case, the mother's condition was discovered too late for preventive treatment, so the baby received a high dose of antiretrovirals just 30 hours after birth. Within a month, its HIV level dropped so much that routine tests failed to detect it. Treatment was discontinued at 18 months and a year later, the child remains HIV-free. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS cautiously welcomed the news, saying more studies were needed to understand this outcome.

● **TB test helps Mozambique**

The GeneXpert machine, which can detect TB in sputum samples, is being rolled out across Mozambique after successful trials

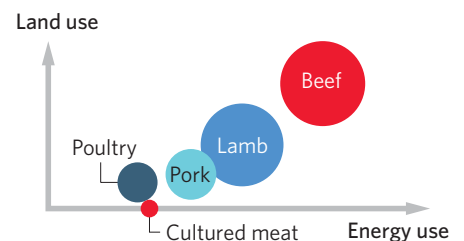
in two cities. It has enabled people to be tested, diagnosed and put on treatment on the same day, significantly improving their prognosis. The project is funded through the World Health Organisation's UNITAID programme. Established in 2006 by Brazil, Chile, France, Norway and the UK, UNITAID uses innovative financing such as an air ticket levy to make better, more affordable health products.

● **Hearing loss affects one in three**

Over 360 million people worldwide – more than ever before – face hearing loss, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). While the aging global population accounts for a large proportion of sufferers, at least 32 million are aged under 15. About half of all cases are preventable and many are treatable, but current hearing aid production meets just 10% of global need. WHO has called for a scale-up of technology transfer to promote access in developing countries.

● **Test-tube meat?**

A team of Dutch scientists is close to producing edible, lab-generated meat, with a product launch planned for spring 2013. The WHO estimates that global demand for meat will double in the next 40 years. According to the FAO, livestock already account for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions, 10% of the world's fresh water supplies and around half of all agricultural land. Animal rights group PETA has offered \$1m to the first commercially viable creator of 'in vitro' meat.



**Environmental impact of producing 1,000kg of edible meat.** Bubble size = greenhouse gas emissions

Source: Reuters/Vincent Flasseur, Kate Kelland, Nov 2011

● **Chemical weapons probe in Syria**

In March, the UN announced an independent investigation into alleged chemical weapon use in Syria – one of the world's largest stockpilers. Inexpensive and simple to develop, several regional states consider chemical weapons to be a 'counter' to Israeli nuclear warheads. 188 states have signed the UN Convention on Chemical Weapons. Syria is not among them.



## The prohibition of fully autonomous weapon systems is needed to prevent a new arms race, writes **Noel Sharkey**

**In January 2013, Ben Emmerson QC, the UN Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights, launched an inquiry examining the impact of the rise in the use of drones and targeted killings. This timely inquiry comes at a point when automated warfare technology is advancing at a worrying rate.**

We are rapidly moving along a course towards the total automation of warfare, and I believe that there is a line that must not be crossed: namely, where the decision to kill humans is delegated to machines. Weapon systems should not be allowed autonomously to select their own human targets and engage them with lethal force.

Drones have been the most controversial tool in the US 'war on terror'. Yet despite the questionable legality of the CIA drone strikes in Pakistan and Africa, drone sales are a highly competitive international business. More than 70 countries now have the technology and sales are predicted to exceed \$89bn within the next 10 years.

Companies hungry to increase their share of the market are turning their attention to new developments such as autonomous operation – i.e. robots that do not require direct human oversight. This has been high on the US military agenda since 2004 for a number of reasons.

Remotely controlled drones are currently only used against low-tech communities in countries where permission to use the air space has been granted. More sophisticated, and less permissive, opponents could adopt counter strategies that would render drones useless by jamming communication signals. But a fully autonomous drone could seek out its target without having to communicate with an operator. The use of autonomous drones is also likely to reduce military costs and the number of personnel required, and to improve operation by stripping out human error and response-time limitations, allowing for sharp turns and manoeuvres at hypersonic speeds.

These developments are well under way. UK defence and aerospace company

BAE Systems will be testing its Taranis intercontinental autonomous combat aircraft demonstrator this spring. The Chinese Shenyang Aircraft Corporation is working on an unmanned supersonic fighter aircraft, the first drone designed for aerial dogfights. And the US has tested Boeing's Phantom Ray and Northrop Grumman's X-47B supersonic drones, which are due to appear on US aircraft carriers in the Pacific around 2019. The US programme has also tested an unmanned combat aircraft that can travel 13,000 mph (20,921.5 kph). The aim is to be able to reach anywhere on the planet within 60 minutes.

***I believe that there is a line that must not be crossed: namely, where the decision to kill humans is delegated to machines***

These programmes are paving the way for very powerful, effective and flexible killing machines, well outside the speed of plausible human intervention, that are rapidly – and drastically – changing the nature of combat. The resultant impact on international humanitarian law could be problematic.

How, for instance, can the Geneva Conventions be applied by machines that cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants, and that cannot determine what constitutes proportionate force? Future technological improvements are highly unlikely to yield great advances in the sort of judgment and intuitive reasoning that humans employ on the battlefield.

In November 2012, Human Rights Watch and the Harvard Law Clinic published recommendations urging all states to adopt national and international laws to prohibit the development, production and use of fully autonomous weapons. Three days later, the US Department of Defense issued a directive on "autonomy in weapons systems" that "once activated, can select and engage

targets without further intervention by a human operator".

It gives developers the green light by assuring us that all such weapons will be tested thoroughly from development to employment to ensure that all applicable laws are followed. But I have serious issues with anyone's ability to verify such computer systems. Moreover, if another country were to deploy such weapons, would the US really let them have the military advantage and not deploy theirs, thoroughly tested or not?

The US directive repeatedly stresses the establishment of guidelines to minimise the probability of failures that could lead to unintended engagement or loss of control. But the list of possible failures is long and includes: "human error, human-machine interaction failures, software coding errors, malfunctions, communications degradation, enemy cyber-attacks, countermeasures or actions, or unanticipated situations on the battlefield."

This list points to a problem with the whole enterprise. How can researchers possibly minimise the risk of unanticipated situations on the battlefield? How can a system be fully tested against adaptive, unpredictable enemies?

The US directive presents a blinkered outlook which appears to ignore that their robots are likely to encounter similar technology from other sophisticated powers. If two or more machines with unknown programmes encounter each other, the outcome is unpredictable and could create unforeseeable harm to civilians.

It seems that an international treaty banning fully autonomous robot weapon systems is the only rational approach. We need to act now before too many countries and military contractors put large investments into the development of these systems, and before there is an arms race from which we cannot return. ●

*Noel Sharkey is Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics and Professor of Public Engagement at the University of Sheffield*





**Drone:** unmanned aerial vehicle controlled remotely or by pre-programmed software. Used for reconnaissance, surveillance or armed with missiles and/or bombs for strikes.

*A remote-controlled Reaper drone landing at Kandahar Airbase in Afghanistan in 2011*  
© UK MOD Image/Alamy

**76**

*countries known to possess drones*

**>1100**

*drone strikes launched by UK and US from 2008 to 2012*

**c.3400**

*estimated people killed by CIA drone strikes in Pakistan (2004-13)*

**£2bn**

*UK expenditure on developing, testing and procuring drones*

**>400**

*UK drones that have crashed, got lost or broken down*

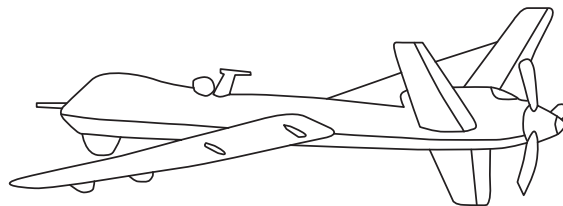
**47%**

*people surveyed in the UK disapproving of drones*

Sources: The Guardian, Drone Wars UK and the British American Security Information Council

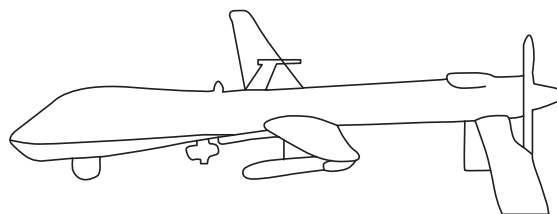
## Types of drones

### Reaper



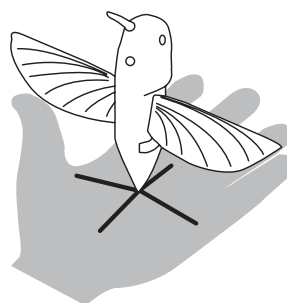
**Length:** 11m  
**Wingspan:** 20m  
**Max speed:** 893kmh  
**Armaments:** up to 14 missiles, or four missiles and two bombs

### Predator



**Length:** 8.2m  
**Wingspan:** 14.8m  
**Max speed:** 217kmh  
**Armaments:** 12 missiles

### Nano Hummingbird



**Wingspan:** 0.2m  
**Total weight:** 0.01kg  
**Endurance:** 11 mins  
**Armaments:** none (designed for surveillance and reconnaissance)

© Finbarr Sheehy for The Guardian



## *Jonathan Hutson looks at how new technological developments can best be made to serve humanitarian ends*

**Humanitarian and human rights leaders receive frequent pitches on the potential of technology to respond ever more rapidly and comprehensively to crises around the globe. Yet when every 24-hour news cycle brings buzz of emerging technologies and breakthroughs, how can we know which ones might be worth adopting?**

While innovations can be head-turning, the primary focus should be on what works best in the field, not whether it is the newest or snazziest thing. So keeping in mind field conditions and the needs and insights of local communities is the best way to identify useful and scalable solutions.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has positioned itself as a convenor, collaborator and thought leader in the ethical and effective use of technology for humanitarian purposes. The body evaluates technological proposals according to a set of key principles, the first of which is to keep local users firmly in mind when judging the appropriateness and efficacy of proposals.

What does this value mean in practice? Humanitarian agencies have long understood that local actors need to be at the heart of interventions. It is they who best know the local situation and who can best determine what help is needed. Their needs and views should be central to the whole process of adapting technology, from brainstorming and testing to implementation and evaluation.

A collaborative approach to identifying solutions should involve local leaders and stakeholders. It should also value transparency – by using open-source platforms and by sharing publicly accessible documentation where possible. When the process of innovation includes and meets the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged people, then the resulting solutions are much more likely to work in the field, perform on a larger scale, and be sustainable in the long run.

The Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP), which documents evidence of mass atrocities on the Sudan/South Sudan

border, has identified culturally appropriate technology in collaboration with marginalised people in hard to reach places.

In June 2011, the government of Sudan began a campaign of house-to-house killing and indiscriminate bombardment near Kadugli, the capital of the war-torn border region of South Kordofan. The Khartoum regime kicked out humanitarian agencies and banned reporters. Thousands of people sought refuge in the caves of the Nuba Mountains. But these people were not cut off from the outside world: some brought solar-powered laptops and other mobile devices with them.

***Technology is morally neutral. It can be used to harm or to heal, to commit a mass atrocity or to document and report one worldwide in near real-time. So humanitarians must embrace technology and apply it to good ends, guided by ethical principles***

Researchers tried various techniques of interviewing survivors, showing them maps and asking them to identify locations where they had observed human rights abuses. But there was a cultural gap; many survivors did not understand the maps. Then SSP changed the game with an elegant innovation.

SSP located and interviewed eyewitnesses, assisted by a Sudanese journalist group called Eyes and Ears Nuba. Instead of showing them maps, SSP provided satellite imagery of Kadugli. The images dated from before the mass graves were reported, so that the eyewitnesses could point out locations based on their recollections, unprompted by the appearance of freshly dug earth.

Drawn on each image was a grid, with a letter marking each column and

numbers indicating the rows. Even people who could not relate to maps instantly understood the satellite imagery. They would place a finger on the image to indicate a mass grave site, and the interviewer would relay: "the eyewitness reported a mass grave in square C2." And each time, recent satellite imagery corroborated the eyewitness reports, revealing the appearance of mass graves.

This technique works quickly and cross-culturally and could be replicated by frontline humanitarian workers identifying locations related to other types of crises, such as a natural disaster or a global health emergency.

SSP also demonstrated that a collaborative, culturally appropriate approach contributes to rapid and reliable documentation, since it allows for data to be triangulated from multiple sources and drawn from different kinds of information streams. SSP fuses eyewitness reports, satellite imagery and open-source documentation, including admissions by Sudanese officials in Arabic media, as well as still photos and videos from Sudanese journalists and people on the ground.

Technology is morally neutral. It can be used to harm or to heal, to commit a mass atrocity or to document and report one worldwide in near real-time. So humanitarians must embrace technology and apply it to good ends, guided by ethical principles. That means making our 'toolboxes' ever more appropriate and available to the most marginalised people in the hardest to reach places, even to families living in caves in a conflict zone. ●

*Jonathan Hutson is Director of Communications for the Enough Project in Washington, D.C., a project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. He is also a spokesperson for the Satellite Sentinel Project, which documents evidence of mass atrocities along the border between Sudan and South Sudan. For more information about SSP, visit [www.satsentinel.org](http://www.satsentinel.org)*



## Satellite imagery of the South Kordofan border region of Sudan



*The above satellite imagery shows the Hilla Gadida area in the South Kordofan border region of Sudan, south of Tilo village, which is near Kadugli*

### 2-7 June

The area shows no signs of visibly disturbed earth.

### 17 June

There is now a pit surrounded by disturbed earth. Within the pit, there is a clearly visible white bundle curved in a letter 'C' shape, consistent with a dead body bent at the waist.

### 4 July

The pit appears to be covered with earth. Near the covered hole, there appears to be a cluster of light-coloured bundles.

### 4 August

There are new structures nearby and visible ground marks consistent with a tracked vehicle. New areas of disturbed earth are visible.

### 6 August

The area of disturbed earth appears to have been expanded.

An eyewitness who spoke to Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) reported seeing a yellow excavator dig and cover mass graves in the area surrounding Tilo village. The witness reported that one of these gravesites is southeast of Tilo village in the Hilla Gadida area and that they observed workers bury more than 30 bodies in two freshly dug holes **on 23 June**.

**On 25 June**, an eyewitness observed two more fresh holes at this grave site with 75 bodies thrown into the holes. Some of the bodies were wrapped in white plastic bags of the sort used for storing dry food products, according to the eyewitness.

This testimony corroborates previous eyewitness testimony, reported directly to SSP, that some human remains being buried south of Tilo village **on 8 June** were wrapped in white plastic bags or light brown bags. Additionally, SSP identified a yellow vehicle consistent with an excavator present near Tilo village, less than a kilometre from the site in the Hilla Gadida area where the bundle was apparently covered with earth.



# Liu Xiaoming on China and the UN

*New World interviews His Excellency Liu Xiaoming, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the UK*

*What has been your country's greatest achievement at the UN?*

Since its establishment, the UN has had remarkable achievements in preventing and reducing conflict and war, promoting economic and social development, and formulating international laws and rules. As one of the UN's founding members and a permanent member of its Security Council, China has made and will continue to make its own efforts in this regard. Given its position and responsibility, China firmly supports the UN's central role in meeting global challenges and advancing world peace and development. China attaches great importance to upholding international justice and the authority of the UN. As always, China remains committed to stepping up "win-win" cooperation with the UN, and with all other countries for peace, development, equality and justice around the world.

*How do you foresee the future global development agenda?*

The MDGs are an important guideline for development cooperation and over the years, the international community has made conscientious efforts to implement them. Yet progress has been unbalanced and some developing countries face enormous difficulties in reaching the Goals by the target date of 2015.

In the coming three years, development cooperation should continue to focus on comprehensively implementing the MDGs. This means providing sufficient resources for development, especially in Africa, and giving greater support to the least-developed countries. Discussions on the future development agenda must not divert or weaken these efforts. Indeed, they will require a thorough stocktake of the implementation of the current Goals.

The future agenda should maintain the focus on poverty eradication. It must acknowledge differing country contexts, uphold the principle of "common but differentiated" responsibilities and respect the development paths of all countries. It needs to strengthen global development partnerships, improve implementation and financing mechanisms, promote trade and investment liberalisation, push forward North-South and South-South cooperation, and scale up Official Development Assistance and technical support for developing countries.

*What are China's top priorities for the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly?*

We have three. First, upholding principles. In dealing with global hotspot issues, the General Assembly should continue to preserve the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty, and the independence and territorial integrity of all countries. It should also increase coordination and cooperation with the Security Council. Above all, there must be an insistence on peaceful settlement of disputes. These things would strengthen the leadership role of the UN in international affairs.

Second, development. Determined and detailed actions are needed to follow up on last year's Rio+20 conference and inject fresh dynamism into the cause of sustainable development. China hopes the process for developing 'sustainable development goals' will be launched this year. This means establishing an intergovernmental high-level political forum and strengthening the UN's central role in this area. We also hope that any process will consider fully the concerns of developing countries, and observe the principle of "common but differentiated" responsibilities.\* And even as the Assembly considers a development agenda beyond 2015 (the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals), it should continue to promote the current Goals.

Third, solidarity. The UN has 193 member states, each with different interests and concerns. The Assembly should conduct its work in a balanced and fair manner, advocate mutual respect and full consultation, and resolve issues through consensus. It should avoid forcing votes or other actions that may cause division or confrontation and undermine solidarity among member states.



### *Should China and other large developing economies increase their UN and aid contributions?*

China and its 'BRICS' partners – Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa – have shown sound economic growth in recent years. But all of us remain developing countries. On a per capita basis, our development level is still way behind that of developed countries. At present, China's economy is only 61% of the US's. Our GDP per capita is a mere 12% of the US level and, according to British scholars, American living standards are respectively four, six and 15 times that of Brazil, China and India. Even by 2022, the economic aggregate of the BRICS countries is estimated to be just 75% of the combined economies of the UK, US, Japan and Germany.

So while developing countries should bear international responsibilities, these must reflect their capacity and stage of development. Where aid is concerned, it should be recognised that the financial crisis dealt a particularly heavy blow to low-income countries. The international community – especially developed countries – must therefore honour its commitment to providing financial support, technology transfer and capacity-building to developing countries, and not shirk its responsibilities.

At the UN, for instance, contributions are strictly based on "capacity to pay", measured in terms of gross national income, as well as per capita income. This is fair and actually, last year's UN budget negotiations saw China's contribution rise from 3.2% to 5.15%. Indeed, the shares of all BRICS countries increased by a large margin.

China is a responsible big developing country. We have kept increasing assistance of various kinds to African and other developing states. Like the other BRICS countries, we see our assistance as mutual help within the framework of South-South cooperation. It can only supplement North-South cooperation, not replace it.

### *What role should the BRICS play within the UN and more widely?*

In recent decades, unprecedented changes have taken place in the international landscape. The overall strength and participation of developing countries in global affairs have greatly increased. But their representation and say in international institutions have not been advanced to reflect this.

The BRICS are important members of developing world. Stronger solidarity and cooperation among BRICS countries is of great significance to promoting peace and development, advancing North-South dialogue and securing the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries. Our nature, historical background and mission suggests that we can and should increase coordination in international affairs, and work together to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

### *What is China's position on reform of the UN Security Council?*

The UN needs to keep pace with the times and carry out necessary and reasonable reforms. This will help enhance its authority, raise its efficiency and better prepare it for fresh challenges. Security Council reform is an important part of this process, but reforming other bodies is also important for the UN to be able to play its full and proper role in world affairs.

In reforming the Security Council, priority should be given to increasing the representation of developing

countries – in particular, African states. This serves the fundamental interests of the small and medium countries that make up the majority of the UN's membership. Security Council reform is highly complex. We should continue with democratic and patient consultations, take into consideration the interest and concerns of all parties, seek a package solution and reach the broadest possible consensus.

China stands ready to work with all other countries to advance Security Council reform in a direction that helps maintain the overall interests of the UN, and solidarity among its member states.

### *In terms of wider reforms, should the UN play a bigger role in global economic governance?*

The international financial crisis has had an immense impact on the world. All countries need to reflect on it, and tackle it at a global level. While some progress has been made in reforming the international financial system, underlying problems remain unresolved. China supports the UN playing a bigger role in global economic affairs. This should include: enhancing dialogue and coordination with the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other such institutions, as well as with the G20; increasing the say and representation of developing countries within these organisations; establishing a fair, equitable, inclusive and orderly international monetary system; toughening the regulation of international financial institutions and shadow banking systems so that the financial sector will better serve the growth of the real economy; and strengthening the role of international financial institutions in development and poverty reduction.

### *And how can the UN become more effective in preventing mass atrocities?*

China is deeply concerned about situations where the lives and property of civilians are threatened and lost in armed conflicts. In these circumstances, we urge all parties to observe international law and relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. The aim is always to fully protect civilians.

All atrocities against civilians should be treated with the greatest possible levels of concern. And they should be punished. According to the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, the government directly concerned bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians. In cases where this government fails to meet its responsibilities, the UN may come to help, but this can only happen at the request or with the consent of the relevant government. In providing such help, the UN should uphold the principles of equity, impartiality and neutrality, and fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country concerned. The UN should also refrain from involvement in local political strife, or hindering a peace process, which will ultimately cause greater loss of life and property.

### *Finally, on a lighter note, would the UN be better off if its headquarters were in China?*

This is a good question and certainly not a light one! It is a question that merits careful thinking. At present, only two UN agencies are headquartered in developing countries. Looking to the future, if, as developing countries grow to have greater influence, more UN agencies have their head offices in them, this would be welcomed by all developing countries and could prompt them all to play a more active role in international affairs. ●

\* Contained in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the phrase seeks to convey that challenges like climate change affect all – and are affected by all – peoples and nations to differing degrees. While responsibility for tackling them is shared, differences in countries' cumulative responsibilities for these issues, as well as their ability to address them, must be taken into account.

# Can technology save the world?

*Below, we feature eight inspiring innovations – four that have the potential to transform lives and four that are doing so already*

## **Gravity lighting**

Over 1.5 billion people do not have access to mains electricity, relying instead on combustible fuels for heat and light. The World Bank estimates that paraffin lamps can account for as much as 10–25% of people's income in some developing countries. They produce around 244m tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year and expose an estimated 780 million women and children to harmful emissions equivalent to smoking two packets of cigarettes every day, not to mention the danger of accidental burns and structure fires.

Developed by [deciwatt.org](http://deciwatt.org), the GravityLight is charged by lifting a bag filled with 9kg of readily available material (e.g. earth, rocks or sand) suspended on a cord. When it descends, gears translate the weight into energy, creating 30 minutes of light whenever needed. It requires no batteries. Indeed, it can be used to charge them. Currently on trial, it is likely to cost less than \$5 when mass produced.

## **Clearing landmines**

According to the Landmine Relief Fund, it could take another century to clear the landmines that are scattered in over 70 countries around the world. Every year, thousands of people, mostly children, are killed and maimed by these devices, and large tracts of land cannot be used for housing or agriculture. Landmines continue to be used despite a global ban, most recently in Syria.

Traditional methods, using humans, dogs and metal detectors, are still the most prevalent and effective ways to detect and clear mines, but they are also slow and inefficient. In Cambodia, 99 out of 100 detection alarms are false. Created by Red Lotus, the Pattern Enhancement Tool for Assisting Landmine Sensing, uses acoustic sensors paired with a smartphone to show the shape of objects buried in the ground. This x-ray-like device is helping to increase the safety and efficiency of de-mining.

## **Barcode protection**

Around 35,000 plant and animal species are at risk of extinction. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species seeks to protect them through a system of permits and certificates. However, profound

challenges remain. Wildlife trafficking increasingly involves crime syndicates and militias – the UN Security Council recently linked illicit ivory trading with the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army. Over the past five years, an upsurge in poaching has reduced the pachyderm population by as much as 11% in some African countries.

The Consortium for the Barcode of Life has developed a barcoding system that can easily and accurately identify species by matching short DNA sequences to samples in a global database. Rapid, cost-effective and standardised, the system could also help mitigate the mislabelling of animal products in Europe and other parts of the world.

## **Ocean filter**

Millions of tonnes of plastic are polluting the world's oceans. Flowing through rivers and waterways, plastic accumulates in five areas of the world's oceans called "gyres". One such gyre, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, is estimated to cover an area twice the size of the US. A threat to hundreds of thousands of animals, ocean plastic also damages vessels, clogs up beaches and transports pollutants that enter the food chain.

Solutions to this problem normally focus on moving through the ocean to collect plastic – a costly and inefficient exercise that is also likely to require a vast amount of energy. The Ocean Cleanup Array, developed by Boyan Slat, is an anchored network of floating booms and processing platforms. The booms act as giant funnels, filtering the debris which is then stored in containers for recycling. As no meshes are used, the risk of by-catch is very low, and the device itself could be powered by solar and wave energy.

## **Rolling water**

Over 700 million people lack access to safe drinking water. For many of them, this means an arduous journey to collect water, a task normally performed by women, who must carry vessels weighing around 20kg on their



**Graphic representation of the Ocean Cleanup Array**  
© Erwin Zwart/Fabrique Computer Graphics





heads. With an average journey length of 6km, this is dangerous, time-consuming and backbreaking work.

The Hippo Water Roller holds 90 litres of water inside a rolling wheel, which can be pushed or pulled with a handle. The effective weight is just 10kg. Designed to last six years in rural conditions, it is now used in 21 African countries, reducing women's health risks and enabling them to spend more time on other activities. The technology has also encouraged more men to share the task of collecting water.

### Mobile money

Across the developing world, many people lack access to financial services, severely impairing their ability to buy and sell goods and services. In South Africa alone, over 13 million economically active people are thought to have no bank account.

Developed and pioneered in Kenya, M-Pesa is a mobile-phone-based money transfer and microfinancing service. It has a wide range of applications, from helping producers to sell their wares to paying bills and receiving loans and remittances. In 2012, some 17 million users were registered in Kenya, and the service has now been rolled out in other developing countries. In Afghanistan, the service was initially tested as a means to pay police salaries, where it significantly reduced fraud. Under the old cash-based model, 10% of the workforce were "ghost" police officers who did not in fact exist.

### Democratising information

When conflict or crises erupt, verifiable information about acts of violence and danger zones can be hard to

obtain and disseminate. This hinders effective responses and leaves people vulnerable, especially when information is controlled by a government unwilling or unable to protect them.

Ushaidi ("testimony" in Swahili) provides free software for information collection and interactive mapping. It aims to democratise information, increase transparency and enable individuals to share their stories. Ushaidi's first project was developed to map reports of violence in Kenya, following the country's post-election crisis of 2007–08. It built up a base of 45,000 users who helped to create a clearer picture of the situation. Since then, it has been used around the world, for election monitoring in Mexico, tracking petrochemical pollution in the US, recording bribes in Pakistan, cataloguing sexual violence in Syria, and reporting mining disasters in the Philippines.

### Needle-free vaccinations

Globally, an estimated 40–70% of needles are reused – a source of infection, injuries and around 1.3 million deaths. The UN World Health Organisation believes that as many as 50% of injections are unsafe, resulting in over 23 million people contracting HIV, hepatitis and other diseases. Its most recent study put the cost of unsafe injections at \$535m a year. This is in addition to the high cost of needle production and safe disposal.

The PharmaJet Stratis Needle-free Injection System can deliver medications and vaccines through a high-velocity fluid jet that penetrates the skin. It prevents cross-contamination and needle-related injuries, cuts down on wasted vaccines, and has the potential to save billions in yearly needle costs. ●

*GPS technology is helping farmers in Kenya to issue prompt warnings of disease outbreaks, monitor weather patterns, track vaccination campaigns and communicate with market and livestock traders. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, which has partnered with NGOs and communications agencies to develop mobile livestock applications, says three out of four Kenyans now have a mobile phone and phones provide 99% of Kenyan internet access*  
© Horizons WWP/Alamy

# China: global innovation engine?

**T**his issue of *New World* considers a range of technological developments and their potential to contribute to tackling global challenges. From addressing food security to combating energy poverty, we ask whether technology can save the world.

In recent years that question has been asked of China. The country has experienced remarkable economic growth over the last three decades, which has helped to lift some 600 million people

out of poverty. While the global financial crisis has slowed its expansion, annual growth is still around 7%. Each year it adds an estimated 50 million consumers to its middle class, and it awards more PhDs and applies for more patents than any other country.

Small wonder that politicians and economists alike are hoping that China will lead global economic recovery and push forward international development. Last year, it helped to boost the International Monetary Fund's lending power, and its contributions to the UN's regular budget rose to 5.15%, making it the sixth largest contributor, just 0.03% behind the UK. Western states are increasingly looking to sell to Chinese buyers, and developing countries, particularly in Africa, are turning to China for aid, trade and investment.

So can China 'save the world'? As Ambassador Liu points out in our interview (see pages 12–13), by any per capita measure, China is still a developing country. It continues to grapple with huge challenges, from mass urbanisation to an aging population, and its success has come at a cost in political, social and environmental terms.

Take pollution. Earlier this year, the Chinese government admitted that chemical pollution has led to soaring cancer rates and environmental disasters. Over 90% of urban groundwater is reportedly contaminated and smog frequently threatens to bring cities to a standstill. In January, air pollution in Beijing is believed to have been nearly 40 times the safe level designated by the World Health Organisation.

Yet many believe not only that China can overcome these challenges, but that in doing so it will help global efforts to tackle climate change and environmental degradation. China has gone from having virtually no green infrastructure in



**A masked cyclist rides past a power plant in Dezhou, in northern China's Shandong Province. In 2008, state media reported that the average air quality in two out of five Chinese cities ranged from 'polluted' to 'hazardous'.**

© Frederic J. Brown/AFP/Getty Images

# Winners of the 2012 WWF Climate Solver China Award



## Hydrodynamic Cooling Tower (Nanjing Xingfei Cooling Apparatus Co., Ltd.)

Huge cooling towers have sprung up across China, as ever more buildings need systems in place to transfer waste heat. Often, these towers require electric fans to aid cooling and these add to energy bills, carbon emissions and risks to workers. This innovative design uses water already present in the towers to drive hydrodynamic fans.



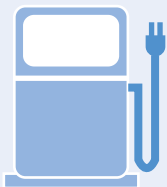
## Thermal-Chemical Absorption Refrigeration System (Wuhan YunheDingyu Refrigeration Science & Technology Co., Ltd.)

In China, as elsewhere, refrigeration – from air conditioning to freezing – is a major source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other greenhouse gases that are commonly used as refrigerants. This new system replaces electricity with heat from industrial steam, engine exhaust and solar energy. It uses ammonia instead of greenhouse gases and eliminates electric compressors altogether.



## LHVG Safe and Clean Power Generation System (China City Environment Protection Engineering Co., Ltd.)

China is the world's leader in steel production, a process that wastes chemical and thermal energy and generates air pollution. This product uses gases that would otherwise be wasted to create greater heat, which drives a gas or steam turbine to produce power for the steelmaker.



## Smart Self-Adaptive Storage Battery Charger (Universal Energy Electrical Co., Ltd.)

Many electric cars can match their petrol counterparts in terms of comfort and performance. But unlike petrol stations, electric car battery chargers are not common and the charging process can be slow. This charger increases charging energy efficiency from a conventional 60%-85% to 97%, making the process at least twice as fast. It is also weighs just one twentieth of traditional chargers with the same power output.

---

2008 to producing 133 gigawatts of renewable energy – enough to power 53 million homes. The world's largest carbon emitter is also fast becoming its biggest green spender. While green investment fell by 11% globally last year, China's contribution rose by 20% to \$68bn, a quarter of the total spent. It is promoting green technologies, with four Chinese companies receiving Worldwide Fund for Nature Climate Solver awards in 2012. And it has set targets for lowering carbon emissions and energy consumption, under the UN's (voluntary) Copenhagen Accord, and in its national five-year plan.

Undoubtedly, China's one-party system is useful in engendering swift change, and activists

at home and abroad fear that the country's growing global stature will impede progress in human rights, democracy, transparency and equality. While the Chinese press and public have been unusually forthright on environmental issues, it is clear that censorship prevails. Recently, the environment ministry refused to disclose data on soil pollution on the grounds of state secrecy.

But while China's environmental efforts can be interpreted as means to secure its own growth and stability, if it is able to rapidly reposition its economy, enact green legislation and develop clean technology, its actions will have a profound impact on sustainable development worldwide. ●





## *Raúl Zambrano describes how innovations in web and mobile technology are being harnessed for human development*

**The new century is just about to enter its teenage years but it has already managed to bring forward dramatic changes that have affected most if not all of us. Looking at these changes with an information and communications technology (ICT) lens, we can detect two visible trends.**

First is the spectacular growth in the use of mobile technologies and devices on a global scale. Latest estimates indicate that we now have over six billion mobile subscribers, and roughly 80% of them are in developing countries. Historians of technology have indicated that this is the first time in history that a technology has spread so fast to so many people in so many countries. Let us bear in mind, however, that most of these users have access to basic mobile devices; smart phones are diffusing at much slower rates and carry heftier price and access tags.

Second is the emergence of social media and other so-called 'Web 2.0' developments, which complement in good fashion the evolution of mobiles. Unlike

the old internet of the 1990s, social media platforms empower users to craft their own content and distribute it in real time to billions of people on a global scale and at almost no cost. Recent data suggests that close to one billion people are on Facebook and over 500 million are using Twitter – staggering numbers, although only a fraction of total mobile users.

That said, mobiles and social media are tightly linked in multiple ways. This was demonstrated powerfully during the beginnings of the Arab Spring, when both were used to mobilise millions of people, ultimately triggering political change. There is, therefore, real potential for new technologies to impact on public space.

ICTs are not alien to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On the contrary, they are an integral part of the Millennium Agenda as reflected in MDG 8, Target 18, which calls for access to ICTs "for all" to be delivered in partnership with the private sector. If we look at the impressive trends in mobile access data, we can surely argue that we are well on the way to achieving this target by 2015. If this is the case, what role should ICTs play in the post-2015 development agenda?

Firstly, Target 18 is focused on access to ICTs. While this is a laudable goal, access in itself does not guarantee progress in other areas. Access to a mobile device does not automatically improve health and education or get you a job. But it could help you to achieve those aims. ICTs are enablers of human development. While access to ICTs was and remains an important global development target, new initiatives must look at their role as a means to an end and not a goal in themselves.

The real development value of the ICTs stems from their transformational potential. ICTs can provide new and innovative solutions to traditional development challenges and priorities, not only by increasing the efficiency and efficacy of processes and outputs but also by radically changing the ways in which development assistance is provided.

Social innovators and entrepreneurs from developing countries are tackling

human development priorities by devising solutions that cater to the needs and demands of local communities. Bottom-up innovation is taking root in many poorer countries, especially in Africa, which seems to be leading the community-based development charge. Mobile and web-based applications have been developed to address a host of issues, including health, education, agriculture and violence against women. Their use is bolstered by the fact that local entrepreneurs enjoy the trust of their communities.

Crowd-sourcing – i.e. gathering user-provided information into one single platform using a simple technology – can also be used for many other purposes, such as monitoring food/staple prices; logging local problems, from crime to potholes; or monitoring human rights abuses. Today, such platforms are used in almost 100 countries.

The same goes for financial and banking services for the poor. M-Pesa (see page 15), a mobile-phone-based money transfer and microfinancing service, was able in five years to reach close to 20 million Kenyans, most of whom did not have access to traditional banking services. Similar initiatives exist in other countries and the potential for growth is enormous. Brazil's Bolsa Familia, for instance, which is the world's largest cash-transfer welfare programme, could greatly benefit from mobile banking.

Employed in innovative ways, old and new ICTs are helping to transform the lives of people around the world. It is crucial that ICTs continue to be a priority for the remaining two years of the MDGs, and that their potential is harnessed by the post-2015 development agenda. The question today is not if ICTs should play a role in development, but rather how we can use these innovations to reach the billions who still have little to no access to basic public and private services. ●

*Raúl Zambrano is the Global Lead/Senior Policy Advisor, ICT for Development and E-governance, UN Development Programme. Visit [www.undpegov.org](http://www.undpegov.org)*



**Child in Nepal uses a computer distributed by One Laptop per Child - an initiative aiming to provide children in developing countries with low-cost (\$100) laptops**  
© Morten Svenningsen / Alamy



## ***Bhaskar Vira & David Nally*** *discuss the role of biotechnology* *in achieving food security*

**Food security and nutrition have emerged as major priorities for the international development agenda after 2015, when the UN Millennium Development Goals expire. They represent a touchstone for progress across a range of development outcomes, including health, education, employment, livelihood security and the environment.**

Last year, the UN Secretary-General launched his 'Zero Hunger Challenge' at the Rio+20 Summit, to urge the international community to eliminate hunger within our lifetimes. In February 2013, a global consultation on hunger, food security and nutrition held in Rome confirmed the centrality of these issues to addressing poverty and inequality.

Eliminating hunger will require action on a host of areas, from governance issues and social protection mechanisms to investment in agriculture and the provision of decent work and opportunities (especially for smallholders). Partnerships between governments, civil society groups and industry will be of particular importance. Such partnerships are not easy to broker, as stakeholder views differ, often irreconcilably, on a number of vital issues. One particularly contentious area is the role and appropriate use of genetic technologies as a key component in the transition towards what has been described as 'resilient' and 'climate-smart' agriculture for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There seems little doubt that securing future food security will involve some use of agricultural biotechnologies such as genetic modification. What is more contentious is the way in which these technologies are likely to be rolled out and, more to the point, who stands to benefit. As with most technologies, the development, deployment and control of agro-biotechnology is likely to result in winners and losers. Despite the common rhetoric of a 'win-win' situation, there is simply no such thing as 'socially neutral' or 'apolitical' technology. There are, for example, considerable differences between publicly-funded genetic research, which is made freely available to farmers

and other producers, and patented and protected technologies that are distributed under the proprietary control of private companies. In reality, developing these technologies is likely to involve some compromise between the need to provide adequate incentives for research and development within the private sector – including the possibility of using limited patents to propel innovation and protect profitability – and the need for these technologies to be used at a sufficient scale to offer truly sustainable solutions to the challenge of feeding over seven billion people.

***Despite the common rhetoric of a 'win-win' situation, there is simply no such thing as 'socially neutral' or 'apolitical' technology***

Concerns about the safety of these technologies are equally paramount. For proponents to dismiss these as the 'irrational fears' of misinformed consumers is short-sighted and seriously underestimates the power of the consumer voice, especially in the digital communication age and with the emergence of strong online lobby groups. It is also patronising. It suggests that consumers should have choice on the shelves but not on the level of information provided on the origins of these products.

National attitudes matter as well. The debate in Europe over the use and deployment of genetically-modified (GM) foods is considerably more cautious than that in North America, and European regulators are far more sensitive to public opinion in their approach to GM crops. In India, one of the largest public consultation exercises on such issues led to the imposition of a two-year moratorium on growing GM brinjal (aubergine) in 2010, despite a report by six of the country's science academies concluding that the crop was safe for cultivation and consumption.

As global food markets become more integrated, the regulation of new

biotechnologies, whether in Europe, India or elsewhere, will have a much wider impact. Indeed, we have already witnessed the tragic consequences of US food aid being rejected by the Zambian government at the height of a major famine in 2002. While people were in desperate need of food, the Zambian leadership felt unable to accept it because the majority of US corn and soya was GM, citing health concerns (perhaps unfounded, as Americans were consuming the same stocks) as well as potential longer-term consequences of GM strains entering the Zambian food system. These included the possible impact on Zambia's future ability to export to GM-wary European markets. The decision to avoid risks associated with 'bio-pollution' may compromise poorer countries' ability to engage in agricultural trade.

The regulation and control of biotechnologies, the transparency of these developments and the right to make informed consumption choices – these concerns are likely to lead to a broader debate, as we move towards an ever-more globalised food production system. The outcomes will profoundly shape our ability to respond to the challenges of feeding the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While some form of biotechnology is likely to be part of the solution, its proponents need to recognise that there are political, social and economic consequences which go beyond technocentric debates about efficiency and effectiveness. Only by recognising this interplay can we harness the promise of these developments in a manner that provides solutions for global food security that are socially acceptable and better for human and environmental wellbeing. ●

*Bhaskar Vira is Senior Lecturer in Environment and Development and David Nally is Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge. They are members of the University of Cambridge Strategic Initiative in Global Food Security, [www.globalfood.cam.ac.uk](http://www.globalfood.cam.ac.uk)*

## The UN & the UK

*This section features an update on UN-related developments in the UK and on UNA-UK's work with British policy-makers*

### Campaign victory – Arms Trade Treaty secured

After nearly 20 years of tireless campaigning by civil society, an Arms Trade Treaty was secured at the UN General Assembly on 2 April 2013. The treaty faced a setback at the Final Conference negotiations, when consensual adoption was blocked by Iran, North Korea and Syria.

Put to the General Assembly however, it required just a simple majority to pass, and did so with 154 votes in favour, three against and 23 abstentions. The treaty, which requires 50 ratifications to come into force, prohibits conventional arms transfers when they would violate relevant international treaty obligations, including those contained in human rights treaties.

UNA-UK campaigned extensively on this issue, and was represented at the final week of negotiations by Communications & Campaigns Officer Ben Donaldson, who worked with partners in the Control Arms coalition. The Association would like to thank its members and supporters who contributed to the success of this longstanding campaign.

*“Our action today is the product of ten years of campaigning and seven years of negotiation. But now, we must look ahead, to the future generations that will have a better chance to live safe and peaceful lives if this treaty fulfils its promise”*

*Jo Adamson, head of the UK delegation to the Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty*

### ‘UN in Parliament’ e-newsletter

UNA-UK recently launched a monthly e-newsletter, which highlights recent developments and discussions in the

UK Parliament relating to UN issues. The UN is at the heart of a number of global challenges that have recently faced parliamentary scrutiny, including:

- Western Sahara: Baroness Warsi, FCO Minister with responsibility for the UN, confirmed that the UK strongly supports UN efforts to ensure “self-determination of the people of Western Sahara”;
- Drones: Lord Judd, a member of the UN All-Party Parliamentary Group (UN APPG), questioned the government on its use of drones, on the basis of a briefing provided by UNA-UK;
- Nuclear disarmament: UN APPG Chair Lord Hannay made a major statement during a House of Lords debate on the challenges facing multilateral disarmament.

**W** Primarily aimed at members of the UN APPG, for which UNA-UK provides secretariat support, the newsletter, which gives further details on the above, is available from [www.una.org.uk/newsletters](http://www.una.org.uk/newsletters)

You can also sign up to receive it by contacting UN APPG coordinator Ben Donaldson on [donaldson@una.org.uk](mailto:donaldson@una.org.uk)

### UK becomes first G8 country to meet 0.7% pledge...

In a statement to Parliament on the 2013 budget, UK Chancellor George Osborne confirmed that the country will spend 0.7% on GDP on international development in the financial year 2013-14, saying “we should all take pride, as I do, in this historic achievement for our country”. The UK is the first G8 country to meet this longstanding UN target, originally set in 1970. In real terms, however, the budget of the Department for International Development will be reduced by £135m, to reflect the downward revisions to the UK’s GDP forecasts. Aid from rich countries fell in 2012 for the second year running, by 4% according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

### And sets out priorities for G8

The UK assumed the one-year presidency of the G8 in 2013. UK Prime Minister David Cameron has stated his top priorities are generating long-term growth, jobs and prosperity, to be achieved by focusing on “open economies, open governments and open societies”. The

G8 countries make up around half the world’s GDP. A group of NGOs, including UNA-UK, have joined forces to urge the UK to use its presidency to take action on hunger. The IF campaign – the biggest of its kind since Make Poverty History – focuses on four core issues: aid, land, tax and transparency.

## Money lost by developing countries to tax havens is estimated to be nearly three times the global aid budget

*Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and IF Campaign ([enoughfoodif.org](http://enoughfoodif.org))*

### Monitoring the UK’s rights record

The UK Parliament’s Joint Committee on Human Rights responded to UNA-UK’s submission on the UK’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN Human Rights Council, which urged it to increase parliamentary oversight of the process. Conducted every four years, the review scrutinises the UK’s human rights performance and generates recommendations for improvement. UNA-UK is currently working with the Committee and a number of stakeholders to promote wider engagement with the UPR and follow-up to the recommendations.

### Support for UN peacekeeping

In February UNA-UK and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office held a joint round-table on the challenges and opportunities facing UN peacekeeping, at which the UK’s support to missions was discussed. UNA-UK will be producing a document with policy recommendations generated at the event, which will be conveyed to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

### UK position on Israel-Palestine

After a UN Security Council briefing on Israel-Palestine in December 2012, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, UK Ambassador to the UN, called Israeli settlement building in the West Bank and east Jerusalem “illegal under international law and detrimental to any international efforts to restart peace negotiations”. These sentiments were





**Labourers work at a housing construction site in the Israeli settlement of Har Homa in east Jerusalem on 27 February 2013. The EU has urged its members to block funding for any settlement activities.**

© Menahem Kahana/AFP/Getty Images

echoed in the UK's response in January to a letter from UNA-UK's Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, which had urged it to vote in favour of upgrading Palestine's UN status to 'non-member observer state'. The vote passed, with the UK among 41 countries that abstained.

**W** Following the vote, UNA-UK published a briefing on the implications of the new status, available from [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

### UK support for victims of sexual violence

Affecting populations around the world – from Bosnia to the DRC to Sri Lanka – sexual violence in conflict continues to challenge the international community. Last year, the Foreign Secretary launched his Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative and the UK has already taken concrete action to tackle this issue. It now has a team of over 70 experts to assist UN missions and other actors dealing with sexual violence on the ground. Some have already been deployed to Syria. It has also pledged £500,000 to the International Criminal Court's Trust Fund for Victims, which provides support to survivors of sexual violence. UNA-UK recently interviewed the UN's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, who said her top priority was tackling impunity.

**W** To read the full interview transcript, visit [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

### ICJ to hear Chagos Islands case

The International Court of Justice has ruled that it can hear a case challenging the UK's decision to establish a marine protected area (MPA) around the Chagos Islands. The process could also require the UK to justify its decisions to lease one of the islands (Diego Garcia) to the United States for military purposes, and to remove and resettle the Chagossians from the territory. UNA-UK wrote to the UK government in May 2010, asking it to reconsider its position on the MPA.


### Post-2015 development agenda


Progress is being made on developing a successor framework to the UN Millennium Development Goals, which are due to expire in 2015. The UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has held three meetings to date, in London, Monrovia and Bali.


The panel, of which UK Prime Minister David Cameron is a co-chair, is consulting with civil society, academia and the private sector on the framework. UNA-UK has been promoting the UN's consultation on the post-2015 agenda, and will feed into the panel's report, due in May 2013.


## Launched: UNA-UK's monthly actions


Each month, UNA-UK calls on its members and supporters to take part in a campaign action related to one of its policy areas. The response has been encouraging. Here's a round up of the results of our recent actions:

 **Show your support on UN Day:** over 1600 signatures were gathered, alongside numerous suggestions as to what issues the UN should prioritise

 **Action to protect the Rohingya in Burma:** 130 letters were handed to the FCO, along with a letter from UNA-UK's Chairman to Baroness Warsi, minister with responsibility for the UN and human rights

 **Thank the UN's human rights champions:** 230 people sent messages thanking the four UK citizens currently working as independent human rights experts. Of the 230 respondents, 192 were previously unaware of their work

 **The 'MY World' global survey:** results from this ongoing global survey will feed into the work of the UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

 **Test your knowledge of sexual violence in conflict:** over 200 people took part in our survey. 75% said it had increased their understanding of the issue





*After the Spring: Prospects for the Arab World in 2013* is a major UNA-UK publication produced in collaboration with Witan Media.

Aimed at scholars, practitioners and interested observers, it explores the implications of the political uprisings that have swept the Middle East and North Africa since late 2010.

Featuring contributions by over 50 experts from within and outside the region, it covers change in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen, and brings together an array of expertise on conflict resolution, reconstruction, development economics and national reconciliation. The human dimension, central to the upheavals, gets particular attention.

Above all, the publication seeks to bring us closer to an understanding of how the changes in the region have occurred and to offer insights into what may lie ahead.

*After the Spring* is available from [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk). All UNA-UK members should have received a printed copy of the publication.

## After the Spring I

Congratulations are due to all who created and distributed *After the Spring*. It deserves to be widely studied. Several important situations in the region that did not arise from 'Arab Spring' events were, of course, not included, such as Israel-Palestine and Morocco-Western Sahara.

Both raise the question of the role of the UN when lands have been occupied and annexed. Do we now have to accept that such seizures become, after a certain number of years, irreversible, or forgotten by the international community? That Tibet is now part of the China, that Western Sahara is part of Morocco, and that the increasing areas colonised by Israel in the lands given to Palestinians by the UN in 1948 are now 'legally' part of the Israeli state? Where would this acceptance end?

What is now the role of the UN in matters concerning disputed borders or sovereignty? This affects not only the cases above but also, for example, the disputed Japanese-Chinese islands, and the Malvinas-Falklands.

Earlier this year, the hostage crisis brought Algeria back to our screens, but the international community should be constantly grateful to the country for welcoming the exiled Saharawis,

as it should be to India for welcoming Tibetans. We must also continue to condemn those states that seem to accept the illegal seizure by Morocco of Western Sahara, and so the right to claim and offer fishing rights in territorial waters which are not legally their own.

Surely there are still ways in which we, through the UN, can act in such situations?

Joyce Pickard  
York

## After the Spring II

UNA-UK's special volume on the Arab awakening was brilliant, timely and worthy of educating all those involved in making decisions about Middle East problems. It is to be hoped that ways will be found of encouraging and publishing responses to this document in an ongoing discourse of mutual learning.

One of my wishes would be to see space given to the urgent need to stress the creative aspects of Islam, and its potential for redeveloping its past heritage of the arts and sciences, which have made such an esteemed contribution to world knowledge and affairs. Although there are welcome initiatives such as the recent Louvre exhibition, the Qatari village

of culture at Katara, and the important educational and artistic work of the Ismailis, these scarcely touch the tragic lives of poverty, oppression and violence of too many in the Middle East. Too often, Islamic teaching about beauty and peace is neglected in favour of jihadist urging.

It is said that Christians tried to conquer with 'a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other'. But there were also ministers and laity of different denominations who shared in the pioneering of health, education and justice ventures. These were appreciated by local people, who eventually helped to institutionalise them, creating their own Christian and other cultures. So I think there is a need for Islamic leaders, theocrats and secularists to focus urgently on replacing the negative and destructive aspects and energies of Muslim sects through persuading them to revitalise their great heritage and join with all peacemakers who are striving to create a safe, happy world for our children.

Yvonne Craig  
London

*Editor's note: UNA-UK is very grateful to all those who took the time to write to us about our After the Spring publication.*

## BRICS – new acronym needed?

I very much enjoyed the recent special issue of *New World*, which focused on the BRICS countries. I would contend, however, that this select grouping is already out of date and a new acronym is needed. Emerging powers such as Turkey, Indonesia and Nigeria already wield considerable influence within their regions, and this will no doubt grow over the coming decade. The BRICS may remain dominant global players, but perhaps it is also time for the TINs?

Sam Willingale  
Suffolk

## Remembering John Willmot

This past year, we were sorry to lose an outstanding member of the UNA Bexhill & Hastings branch. John Willmot, a former

UN Development Programme worker, was a branch stalwart for some 30 years. Not afraid to get stuck in, he used to advertise our summer fêtes by driving his car around the town with a loudspeaker on the top. A tall, distinguished figure, he attended a branch meeting for the last time just a few weeks before he died, more than 90 years of age. If UNA-UK and the branch can find members like John in the future, then the Association will surely thrive.

Allan Bula  
Bexhill-on-Sea

## NATO – still relevant?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the only regional military alliance of the Cold War era still in existence. I find it difficult to see what continuing purpose it serves. Can *New World* start a debate about this? Is there a case for British disengagement?

John Cartledge  
Cambridge

## **Annual General Meeting 2013**

The Annual General Meeting of UNA-UK will take place at 3pm on Thursday 20 June 2013 in the Eastwood Room of the Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

All paid-up and honorary UNA-UK members have been sent the notice and other relevant information with this issue of *New World*. Please refer to the letter from UNA-UK's Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, which provides further detail on proceedings.

### **Voting**

All paid-up and honorary UNA-UK members have the right to attend and vote. Those unable to attend have the right to appoint a proxy. Proxy voting forms are available from [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk) or by contacting the Company Secretary on [donnelly@una.org.uk](mailto:donnelly@una.org.uk) or 020 7766 3455.

### **Topics for discussion at the AGM**

The UNA-UK Board has agreed that all paid-up and honorary members can submit topics for discussion at the AGM. These must focus on management and governance issues only (policy issues will go to the 2013 Policy Conference). Information on submitting topics has been sent to all paid-up and honorary members by email and with this issue of *New World*. The deadline for submissions is 3 May 2013.

Detailed information on the above has been sent to all paid-up and honorary members of the Association with this issue of *New World*. If you have not received this information, please consult the UNA-UK website ([www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)) or contact the Company Secretary on [donnelly@una.org.uk](mailto:donnelly@una.org.uk) or 020 7766 3455.

## **UNA-UK's policy priorities – have your say!**

As a grassroots organisation, UNA-UK's members play an active role in helping us to achieve our objectives and to identify policy priorities: There are three main channels for this:



### **Policy conferences**

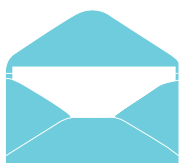
UNA-UK holds regular policy conferences at which members debate issues of concern to the UN and identify emerging developments. The conferences are organised by a committee elected from and by UNA-UK members, and the agenda for these meetings is constructed entirely from policy positions put forward by the membership.

If you haven't already registered to attend our Policy Conference on 27 April 2013, secure your place by visiting [www.una.org.uk/policyconference](http://www.una.org.uk/policyconference).



### **Policy Advisory Group**

Consisting of experts from a range of fields, the Group advises the UNA-UK Board and staff on policy matters and acts as a sounding board for suggestions from the wider membership. The Chair of the Policy Conference is a member of the Group. More information and minutes of the Group's meetings are available from [www.una.org.uk/content/policy-advisory-group](http://www.una.org.uk/content/policy-advisory-group).



### **Policy Inbox**

We recently launched this online tool to help members to have input into our policymaking on an ongoing basis. Submissions are reviewed regularly and when there is a critical mass of support for a particular action or issue, we will endeavour to address this in our work. Visit [www.una.org.uk/policy-suggestion](http://www.una.org.uk/policy-suggestion) to find out more.

### **Send your letters to:**

Natalie Samarasinghe  
UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court  
London SW1A 2EL  
email: [samarasinghe@una.org.uk](mailto:samarasinghe@una.org.uk)



## UNA-UK Members



### *Gillian Briggs on how UNA Birmingham celebrated International Women's Day*

For the first time ever, UNA Birmingham branch had a stall at one of the city's International Women's Day celebrations. Held on 7 March at the Balsall Heath Church Centre, located in an ethnically diverse, inner city area of Birmingham, the event focused on 'women's safety issues'.

The theme sat well with UN's own priorities for International Women's Day. This year, the UN sought to generate awareness and action on violence against women. Across the globe, women of all backgrounds are affected by violence, from abuse in their own homes to mass rape in conflict situations.

The figures are truly shocking. 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not considered a crime. As many as 70% of women worldwide report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime. And up to 50% of sexual assaults are committed against girls under the age of 16.

UNA-UK has also been focusing on violence against women, in particular sexual violence in conflict. In the run-up to International Women's Day and the 2013 UN Commission on the Status of Women, it asked its members and supporters to test their knowledge of this horrific and widespread crime, and to visit the UN's Stop Rape Now website for ideas on how to take action.

At the Birmingham event, the focus was on domestic violence - too often a hidden problem. We heard an excellent speech on the subject, which resonated with the many communities represented at the event.

Speaking in my capacity as Chair of the Women's Advisory Council (WACUNA), I was able to introduce those present to WACUNA and UNA-UK. I explained that we were being represented at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (a report is available from [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)), where violence against women was being discussed. This emphasised that the UN was giving priority to this important issue, and that it is a global problem and not just a local or even national one.



**Singer Jerrilyn Mulbah performs at a concert to mark the end of the first phase of the UN's Stop Rape Now campaign in Liberia in 2008**

© UN Photo/Christopher Herwig

We were also able to attract a great deal of interest through our stall. In fact, the majority of our literature went, including membership forms!

The following day, I attended a lunchtime concert at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham, at which an all-women singing group presented modern songs written by women composers. This was the first time

the university had organised a concert specifically for International Women's Day. After the event, there was a tour of the art gallery, where it was wryly pointed out that all the pictures featured were by male artists, but that one of the Institute's founders and benefactors had been a woman: Lady Constance Barber.

Both these events illustrate the different ways in which communities can mark International Women's Day: highlighting serious ongoing challenges, such as violence against women; celebrating and empowering women, like the singers and composers; and drawing attention to areas where women are still under-represented. ●



## **Natalie Chindipha, UNA-UK** *Youth Intern, on tackling nuclear disarmament*

Over the past months, members of UNA Youth and Generation United Nations, UNA-UK's new programme for 13-18-year-olds, have been actively supporting UNA-UK's Towards Zero initiative on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

On 23 February, some 200 school and university students from across the UK took part in a one-day conference in north London to explore 'new nuclear realities' with high-profile experts and policymakers.

John Duncan, former UK Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament, kicked off the day with a wide-ranging presentation on the past and current contexts of nuclear weapons policy. His speech was followed by a discussion with panellists Mark Fitzpatrick (International Institute for Strategic Studies), Rebecca Johnson (Acronym) and Patricia Lewis (Chatham House). Chaired by Paul Ingram of the British American Security Information Council, the panel addressed a number of key issues, including: tactical nuclear weapons in Europe; the prospects for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East; broadening support for the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty; and the likelihood of further reductions in Russian and US nuclear arsenals.

After a networking lunch, participants chose between two breakout sessions. One explored the morning's themes in a more intimate setting with young professionals working in the field. The other offered students guidance on international job prospects, with speakers representing the government, communications and NGO sectors, each at different stages of their own careers.

The day was rounded off by a fascinating keynote speech by Lord Hannay of Chiswick, former UK ambassador to the UN. Focussed on the run-up to the 2015 Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference, Lord Hannay also touched on nuclear proliferation in Iran and North Korea, and the UK's own nuclear weapons.

Commenting on the event, Stephen Vanson, UNA Youth President, said: "it's

rare that regular students are surrounded by some of the UK's most influential voices on these issues. UNA Youth members seized this opportunity by asking insightful and interesting questions."

This event complemented two previous UNA-UK initiatives. In November 2012, Stephen Vanson and I spent a week at the European Parliament with Global Zero (see box for my report), and in December last year, Generation United Nations competition winner Ethan McLaughlin took part in a meeting with former UK Defence Secretary Lord Browne of Ladyton. At the meeting, Lord Browne addressed members of UNA-UK's young nuclear professionals group and engaged in a lively Q&A session on issues ranging from nuclear weapons and humanitarian law, to the question of what, if anything, UK unilateral nuclear disarmament would bring to global political efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. ●



**Participants at the UNA Youth 'New Nuclear Realities' conference © UNA-UK**

## **UNA Youth at the European Parliament**

Global Zero is a movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and a close partner of UNA-UK's Towards Zero programme. Myself, three other student activists and two Global Zero organisers were invited to the European Parliament as guests of MEP Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa. Mr Wałęsa gave us the opportunity to speak to MEPs regarding Global Zero's Action Plan for the phased and verified elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide.

We spent the week talking to MEPs from different countries, who represented parties from across the political spectrum, asking them to sign and support a declaration urging states to recognise and consider the security risk of nuclear weapons in today's post-Cold War world. The declaration also encouraged states to engage in multilateral disarmament negotiations. A majority of members have now signed the declaration, meaning that the European Parliament officially supports the aims of UNA-UK's Towards Zero programme.

Our trip was driven by a belief in the importance of European engagement with the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. It is hoped that once Europe's leaders take the step to support this goal, it will move us one step closer to removing weapons from the European continent and subsequently one step closer towards removing nuclear weapons from the world altogether.



*Help us build a new  
generation for the UN*

At UNA-UK, we meet hundreds of school students who are passionate about global affairs. These young people have the potential to bring about huge changes, in how the United Nations works, how it is perceived and how it interacts with the people whom it serves.

*“Youth can determine whether this era moves toward greater peril or more positive change”*

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**

Their teachers and educators contact us because they want to make sure that every single one of their students has the chance to explore how they could have a positive impact on the world.

We want to encourage young people in the UK to turn their interest in the UN and international affairs into a lifelong passion. We want to support them as they find out how best they can contribute to a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. And we want to nurture the next generation of global citizens and UNA-UK members.



© UNA-UK/Mark Makela

## **Help us build a new generation for the UN**

In November 2011, we launched Generation United Nations, a programme to engage 13-18 year olds with the work of the UN and of UNA-UK. After just one year, this programme has already had great impact, but we know it has the potential to do much more.

We have touched hundreds of young lives through our dedicated resources and events, such as our national schools Model UN tournament, our UN careers and 'masterclass' events; our UN schools teaching pack and a new membership programme for this age group.

With your help, the hundreds of young people engaged in the programme could become thousands. We are therefore inviting you to be part of our ambitious plan to create the next generation of UN enthusiasts by donating to our Generation United Nations appeal.

This is what we want to achieve together:

- **Hold bigger and better Model UN events** – By giving young people a taste of how the UN works in practice, we are not only teaching them about the Organisation but equipping them with key skills and a passion to do more. They leave excited and enthused about their potential to change the world.
- **Run more UN 'masterclasses'** – These one-day courses introduce young people to the work and aims of the UN and provide them with advice on their future studies and on careers in the international arena.
- **Reach out to young people in more deprived areas** – Everyone has a contribution to make and it is our shared responsibility, as well as in our collective interest, to make sure that no one is left behind.
- **Recruit 'GenUN' members** – These are the UNA-UK members of tomorrow so it is crucial that we start developing a strong relationship with them now.

## **A wise investment**

Building the next generation of UN supporters is an ambitious goal, but as the only organisation in the UK that focuses on connecting people with the United Nations, we know that it is up to us to achieve it. And we know that we can. We have:

- **A proven track record** – UNA-UK has already run successful projects and events for this age group. Our challenge now is to expand this work to give it a wider impact.
- **Contacts and expertise** – As a well-respected NGO devoted solely to UN issues, UNA-UK can draw on contacts and expertise to inspire young people. Working with partners like the UK National Commission for UNESCO and the British International Studies Association helps us to keep our costs down, meaning we can reach more schools and more students.
- **Existing networks** – Our established network of university and local branches means we already have a presence in many local communities. It also means that the young people we engage through Generation United Nations have a natural next step when they want to get more involved with UNA-UK.

Generation United Nations will help to inspire future diplomats, UN practitioners and civil society leaders. It will help to nurture a whole new group of activists for global justice.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself has said: “youth can determine whether this era moves toward greater peril or more positive change.”

We have some exciting work ahead of us and we want you, as UNA-UK members and supporters, to be a part of it, so please give generously to our appeal by visiting:

[www.una.org.uk/donate](http://www.una.org.uk/donate)



*Aimed at 13-18 year olds,  
UNA-UK's Generation  
United Nations programme  
seeks to inspire future  
diplomats, UN practitioners  
and civil society leaders.*

*Help us build the next  
generation of UN and  
UNA-UK supporters!*



**UNA-UK**

To support UNA-UK's work with young people, please visit [www.una.org.uk/donate](http://www.una.org.uk/donate)

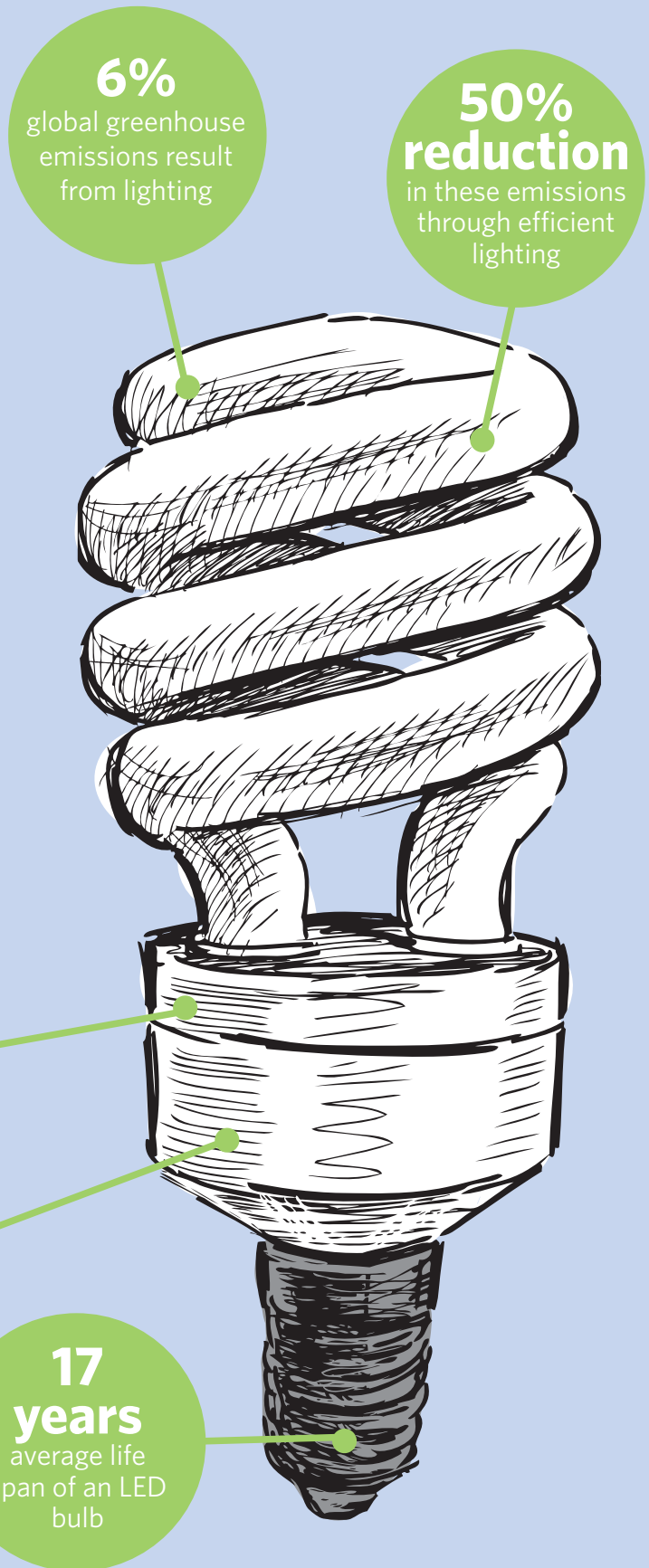
# Time to switch

Energy efficiency, universal access and renewable energy are the three objectives of the UN's Sustainable Energy for All campaign.

Electricity for lighting accounts for almost a fifth of global power consumption and around 6% of greenhouse gas emissions. Switching to efficient bulbs would halve these emissions.

In September 2012, the European Union's phasing-out of the sale of inefficient incandescent light bulbs was completed - a move predicted to save 2-5m tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year in the UK alone. But inefficient lighting continues to be used in businesses and homes.

Switching now to efficient bulbs will save energy and money - a small act that will make a big difference.



UNA-UK

[www.sustainableenergyforall.org](http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org)