

# Towards a strong, credible and effective United Nations

UNA-UK policy document 2009-10

as agreed by the membership at UNA-UK's 64th Annual Conference  
Scottish Parliament and Edinburgh University  
5-7 June 2009



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## 1. Peace & Security

### Cyprus reunification talks

*UNA-UK:*

- *notes the positive developments concerning the potential resolution of one of the oldest conflicts on the UN agenda:*
  - *the first direct meeting of Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders hosted by the UN in March 2008;*
  - *the opening of Nicosia's Ledra Street crossing in April 2008;*
  - *and, in July 2008, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's appointment of former Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, as his Special Adviser on Cyprus to facilitate comprehensive talks; and*
- *welcomes the continuing constructive talks led by Greek Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government, with its special and historic interests, to use its 'good offices' at every opportunity to encourage and support all concerned in reaching a solution that will bring about the reunification of the island and allow the UN peacekeeping force (UNFICYP) to 'go home'.

### Afghanistan

*UNA-UK:*

- *notes with deep distress the escalating violence and instability in Afghanistan,*
- *believes that the present insurgency will not be overcome by military action alone, and*
- *recognises that any settlement will require the support of the Afghan people.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- (i) concentrate on economic and social reconstruction and development, both for Afghanistan and for the region generally, and the protection of the civilian population,
- (ii) support the democratically elected government, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, whilst ensuring that any military action avoids civilian casualties,
- (iii) enter into dialogue and negotiate cease-fires with any element prepared to take part in the political process, and
- (iv) work towards the withdrawal of British troops.

## Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation

UNA-UK:

- *welcomes the recent calls for the reduction in nuclear weapons, especially from President Obama, and the UK government's proposals to reduce the number of Trident warheads, and*
- *notes the UK's obligation under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to 'pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control'.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) participate substantively in negotiations between the nuclear-weapon states to reduce their nuclear arsenals and to not proceed immediately with the renewal of the Trident missile system, and
- (ii) use a significant percentage of resources so released for an increased role in UN peace-building and conflict resolution activities.

## Nuclear disarmament

*UNA-UK notes the move by both the United States of America and the Russian Federation at their meeting on 1 April 2009 to reduce their nuclear arsenals.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to keep up the pressure to ensure that this momentum is not lost by pressing for a reduction in nuclear arms by all members of the nuclear club and working to prevent nuclear proliferation throughout the world.

## Towards a world without nuclear weapons

UNA-UK:

- welcomes President Obama's recent call for a world without nuclear weapons (Prague, 5 April 2009);
- endorses the moves now being made to reinvigorate nuclear disarmament and to strengthen non-proliferation, which should include the following concrete steps:
  - reducing the nuclear arsenals of all nuclear-weapon states and reaffirming the case for their making a 'no first use' commitment,
  - bringing the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty into force, in particular through ratification by the US, China and India,
  - negotiating a treaty to end verifiably the production of fissile materials,
  - achieving universal application of the IAEA's Additional Protocol,
  - strengthening the Security Council's negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon states,
  - setting up an international fuel bank that guarantees access to civil nuclear power generation without increasing the risks of proliferation; and
- recommends that its Board of Directors authorise UNA Edinburgh's convenor, Gari Donn, to present this resolution to the WFUNA Plenary Assembly in Seoul in August 2009.

## Iran

UNA-UK notes:

- *the accusations and clarion calls for military action against Iran and its 'nuclear programme', and*
- *that Iran has signed the NPT and consistently states that it seeks nuclear energy only and rejects nuclear weapons, which are condemned by their religious leaders as un-Islamic.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government and the international community to:

- (i) hold Iran verifiably to its stated rejection of a nuclear weapon capability, and
- (ii) work by diplomatic means towards a solution to the problem and to resist calls for military action against Iran.

## Israel/Palestine conflict in Gaza

*UNA-UK, appalled by the Israel/Palestine conflict in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009 and the resultant large-scale destruction of lives and infrastructure, including civilians under the protection of UN agencies:*

- *notes the mounting evidence of violations of the Geneva Conventions by both the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), in disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks on Gaza, and by Hamas, during armed attacks on Israel,*
- *notes also the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and its non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 446, and 194,*
- *affirms the right of the Palestinian people to a sovereign and independent state on the territories awarded to them by the UN in 1947, and the right of Israel to security within agreed boundaries,*
- *welcomes the representations made on our behalf by Lord Hannay, including the call for Israel to carry out its obligations under the Geneva Conventions, and,*
- *welcomes the ceasefire and UK government support for the Middle East Peace Process based on a two-state solution involving a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestine state, as foreseen in UNSCR 1850.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- (i) call for the establishment of a comprehensive independent investigation into alleged war crimes committed by all parties during the recent conflict, and to call on both sides to co-operate fully with the investigation,
- (ii) call for a moratorium on the supply of arms and related materials to both sides of the conflict,
- (iii) call for the immediate removal of the blockade of Gaza,
- (iv) call for the suspension of preferential trading relationships between Israel and the European Union until Israel meets its obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions, and
- (v) support dialogue with all parties, including Hamas.

UNA-UK calls on the UN to:

- (i) press both sides to pay reparations for wanton damage caused to civilians and civilian targets by combatants, and
- (ii) press Israel to pay for the damage that its forces inflicted on UN property and personnel during the conflict.

## Gaza crisis

UNA-UK:

- *welcomes the UK government's efforts to do everything possible to make the ceasefire in Gaza sustainable, and, through DFID, its work to alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza, and*
- *notes that these measures alone cannot lead the way to permanent peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians because they do not take into account the root causes of the hostilities.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to take the initiative in recommending that the UN set up a commission, in light of the history of Palestine in the 20th Century, to explore the possibilities for reconciliation, justice, repatriation and compensation for refugees, in consultation with all the parties involved, including the governments of neighbouring countries.

## Gaza seaport and airport

*UNA-UK accepts that Israel has a right, if it so wishes, to close its frontier with Gaza, but does not accept that Israel has any right whatsoever to restrict the movement of the people of Gaza to and from the rest of the world.*

UNA-UK recommends that the UN should finance and build a functioning seaport and airport in Gaza, to facilitate the free movement of its people as part of the overall reconstruction of the territory following recent Israeli attacks.

## Israel and Palestine

UNA-UK:

- *observed with horror Israel's attack on Gaza, including on civilian, medical and UN facilities, and*
- *notes that the siege of Gaza and Israeli Defence Forces' incursions continue, in the West Bank also.*

UNA-UK:

- (i) calls on the UK government, an avowed 'friend of Israel', to hold Israel to account for its failures to abide by UN Security Council resolutions, international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions, and agreements made with the Palestinian Authority in respect of obligations towards the Palestinian people whose land it occupies, and
- (ii) calls on the UK government and the international community to impose on Israel the same sanctions that have been imposed on other nations in breach of international and humanitarian law, if Israel continues to prevent full movement of goods and services into Gaza, and maintains and expands its occupation of the West Bank and restrictions on Palestinians.

## West/Middle East dialogue

*UNA-UK welcomes recent changes in tone from military threat and megaphone diplomacy to dialogue with a degree of mutual respect, especially between the West and countries of the Middle East.*

UNA-UK encourages the UK government and the international community to pursue dialogue instead of isolation, in particular with Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hizbullah, as the best way to resolve their differences with the West, and tensions within the Middle East.

## Occupation of the West Bank of Palestine

UNA-UK:

- *notes with grave concern that the military occupation of the West Bank of Palestine has now lasted 42 years, during which time a great deal of land has been expropriated from the Palestinian people for the benefit of Jewish settlers, contrary to international law; and*
- *considers this to be a gross violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people, and a contributory cause of instability in the Middle East.*

UNA-UK recommends that the UN Security Council:

- (i) require the complete withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the West Bank and the demolition of all Jewish settlements by a specific date, the process to be supervised by an international inspection body; and
- (ii) order that the Israeli security wall, insofar as it intrudes on Palestinian territory, should be demolished or re-sited.

## Middle East

UNA-UK:

- *notes that the recent violence in Gaza underlines the urgency of re-starting a comprehensive effort to find comprehensive solutions to the issues in dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbours;*
- *welcomes the US administration's appointment of George Mitchell as its special envoy to the Middle East, and its stated intention to engage Syria in efforts to develop an inclusive peace process; and*
- *also welcomes the steps taken so far by the Obama administration to conduct direct dialogue with Iran.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) ensure that this process is inclusive, encompassing all elements of the Palestinian population prepared to proceed on the basis of the Arab peace initiative; and
- (ii) wholeheartedly encourage the administration of President Obama to give the highest priority to sustaining this trend and getting such a process underway.

## Recognition of outstanding services to UN peacekeeping

UNA-UK notes the establishment of:

- *the Dag Hammarskjöld medal for posthumous award to members of UN peacekeeping operations, and*
- *a UN medal for award to military personnel and civilian police who are or have been in the service of the UN.*

UNA-UK recommends that:

- (i) the UN create an award for outstanding service or bravery, by any man or woman of any nationality and any rank, serving in the field in a UN peacekeeping operation;
- (ii) the award be made by the UN Security Council on the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General, who would seek such advice on the making of an award as might seem most appropriate; and
- (iii) the UK government establish a memorial to all UK citizens that have lost their lives whilst serving in UN peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

## UN peacekeeping – overstretch and the UK's contribution

*UNA-UK notes:*

- *that the steep rise in UN peacekeeping commitments is leaving missions underfunded and overstretched,*
- *that establishing new missions is increasingly seen as a panacea to crisis, irrespective of whether the force can be deployed or will be effective,*
- *the reluctance of member states, in particular those with extensive military capacity, to contribute personnel to missions, and*
- *that the UK government has warned that it may cut its civilian peacekeeping contributions.*

*UNA-UK welcomes the UK- and French-initiated Security Council review of peacekeeping operations, and the AU-UN panel review of support for AU peacekeeping.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) work at the Security Council to ensure that missions are given realistic mandates,
- (ii) support proposals for UN-authorized AU peacekeeping operations to be funded through the UN peacekeeping budget,
- (iii) not cut its financial contributions to UN peacekeeping, and
- (iv) increase significantly its contribution of soldiers, police and civilians to the current UN peacekeeping operations in the field.

## Depleted uranium weapons

*UNA-UK notes:*

- *the serious health effects caused by weapons containing uranium, and*
- *that the claim that they are 'safe' is untenable until detailed studies have been undertaken upon already-exposed civilian populations.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) recognise concerns about the serious health effects caused by weapons containing uranium,
- (ii) support and act upon the EU Parliament Resolution P6\_TA(2008)0233 calling for an EU-wide moratorium on uranium weapons, and
- (iii) work towards a global ban on their manufacture, storage and use.

## Women peacekeepers

*UNA-UK notes that sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, who should be setting an example, has besmirched the name of the UN.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government, and other UN member states, to press for:

- (i) better training for all peacekeepers,
- (ii) improved methods of accountability for all UN member states contributing personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, and
- (iii) more women to be involved in peacekeeping operations.

## 2. Human Rights & Humanitarian Action

### Torture and extraordinary rendition

UNA-UK notes:

- *the serious allegations that UK agencies have been complicit in the torture of detainees suspected of terrorist offences,*
- *the expressed view of the High Court that it was for the Joint Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee to 'hold those in charge of the secret intelligence service and security service and Her Majesty's Government to account',*
- *with approval President Obama's Executive Order returning the USA to full compliance with the Geneva Conventions to all detainees under its control, and*
- *the statement made by the Foreign Secretary to the House of Commons (26 February 2009) that UK forces handed over two persons to US forces who were then rendered to other parts of the world.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) reaffirm its commitment to the UN Convention Against Torture, and
- (ii) urgently institute an independent judicial inquiry into allegations that UK agencies have been involved in such illegal acts, including through cooperation with foreign counterparts, in order to ensure there are no breaches of international human rights law on torture and extraordinary rendition.

### Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture

UNA-UK:

- *welcomes the decision of the UK government (31 March 2009) to establish finally the National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) as required by the Optional Protocol of the UN Convention against Torture, and*
- *commends the UK government for supporting the campaign to encourage widespread ratification of the Optional Protocol.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- (i) recognise the need to provide the NPM with sufficient additional funding to ensure it properly fulfils its responsibilities under the Optional Protocol, and
- (ii) continue its efforts to encourage other states to sign the Optional Protocol.

### Safeguarding journalists

UNA-UK:

- *welcomes UN Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) reminding states that in war, journalists are covered by the Third Geneva Convention (1949) and that attacks on journalists during conflict are war crimes;*
- *notes with concern that very few killers of journalists are brought to justice; and*
- *notes also that aggression against journalists, media personnel and media outlets is a human rights violation and a denial of freedom of information, and thereby strikes at the heart of both justice and good government.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) support UNESCO in its practice of condemning such acts whenever and wherever they occur,
- (ii) give its full support to UNESCO in its campaign against such practices, and
- (iii) raise this matter in the Human Rights Council and seek to investigate it further through the office of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

### Humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka

*UNA-UK notes that a military solution is not enough to solve the conflict in Sri Lanka, and is deeply concerned that:*

- *there have been gross human rights violations on both sides of the conflict involving the death and mutilation of thousands of innocent people,*
- *hundreds of thousands of civilians were displaced and trapped by fighting in recent months,*
- *that new estimates put the civilian death toll at over 20,000 in the days leading up to the cessation of hostilities,*
- *conditions at the camps for the displaced remain poor and that the movement of civilians is severely restricted, and*
- *there have been serious and deadly attacks on parliamentarians, aid workers and journalists who have been critical of government policies, and on lawyers representing victims of human rights violations.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to urge the Sri Lankan government to:

- i) ensure that the UN is allowed full access to the displaced;
- ii) ensure that all Tamils, including in particular the displaced, are treated as full citizens, not held in camps indefinitely, and not subjected to any acts of retribution; and
- iii) do all it can to achieve reconciliation and to honour its stated commitment to a just political solution that is acceptable to all communities.

### Trafficking of women & children for sexual exploitation

*UNA-UK:*

- *welcomes the UK's adoption of an Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking and UK ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking,*
- *notes that trafficking of women and children into the UK for sexual exploitation continues to grow, resulting in degradation and suffering for the victims, and*
- *notes that the Director-General of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime has recently reported that 'many governments are still in denial' about this issue.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) implement more successfully and effectively existing protocols and conventions to eliminate this cruel and illegal practice, especially in the build-up to and during the 2012 Olympics when large numbers of people will be visiting the UK; and
- (ii) use its influence at the UN to encourage other states to publicise and implement the UN Protocol Against Trafficking In Persons and persuade source countries to prosecute traffickers.

## UN Human Rights Council – UK’s review

*UNA-UK notes that:*

- *the UK is a First Session State in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process which sets out to assess the human rights records of each UN member state,*
- *the post-UPR stage is devolved to states to make periodic reports to the UN, and*
- *history shows that all states seek to paint a better self-portrait.*

UNA-UK, seeking to ensure transparency at all stages of this process and to encourage those in states with a poorer human rights record than the UK:

- (i) calls on the UK government to convene a group of NGOs to assist in monitoring its performance and to agree an annual report, and
- (ii) urges the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to reconvene the First Session States in Geneva in October 2009 to share their post-UPR records leading to the creation of a robust universally applicable post-UPR template for all states to use.

## Rights of persons with disabilities

*UNA-UK:*

- *welcomes the UK government’s decision to initiate the ratification process of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and its stated intention to sign the optional protocol to this convention,*
- *is concerned, however, that the UK plans to make four reservations, all of which have been deemed unnecessary by disability rights campaigners, and that its 2008 assessment of the value of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was overwhelmingly negative.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- (i) reconsider these reservations, including through a full and open consultation with disabled people and with organisations such as the Equality & Human Rights Commission, and
- (ii) recognise the wider value of individual petitions in protecting human rights in the UK and support other UN individual complaints mechanisms.

## UN Human Rights Council

*Noting that the UN General Assembly has agreed to carry out a review of the Human Rights Council by 2011,*

UNA-UK urges the UK government, when preparing for the review, to give full weight to:

- (i) strengthening the Universal Periodic Review by applying lessons learned from the UK’s experience,
- (ii) ensuring that Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is given the resources necessary to service the Council, including UPR and the Special Procedures,
- (iii) ensuring that resolutions are followed up effectively and that they do not focus disproportionately on one human rights situation to the detriment of others meriting the Council’s attention,
- (iv) improving the quality of NGO participation in the Council’s work, and
- (v) consideration of whether the Council should be made a principal organ of the UN.

## Violence against women

*UNA-UK notes:*

- *that in some countries, as many as one in three women are beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in their lifetimes; worldwide, one in five women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime; more than 80 per cent of trafficking victims are women; violence against women constitutes a gross human rights violation, undercuts peace and security, and threatens to derail the Millennium Development Goals; and*
- *the importance of past efforts by UNIFEM and other agencies to galvanise action to reverse these trends.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to give political and material support to the UN Secretary-General's multi-year campaign to end violence against women – 'UNite to End Violence against Women' - which aims, between 2008 and 2014, to bring men and women together in a concerted effort to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls around the world.

## Aung San Suu Kyi and political prisoners in Burma

- *Appalled at the arrest on trumped-up charges of Aung San Suu Kyi, shortly before her house arrest was due to expire,*
- *deeply concerned at the conditions in Insein Prison and the lack of transparency during her trial,*
- *noting that she has spent 13 of the last 19 years under house arrest, and*
- *welcoming UK, EU and US protests at her arrest, and the Security Council statement on the importance of releasing all political prisoners and of genuine dialogue between all parties concerned,*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- i) persist in protesting against Suu Kyi's arrest and trial, and in calling for her release;
- ii) continue increasing aid to NGOs working in Burma;
- iii) explore the possibility of further targeted sanctions; and
- iv) seek to engage India, China and ASEAN countries in achieving inclusive national reconciliation with UN support.

## Respect for culture

*UNA-UK notes that:*

- *in some cases culture takes second place to the needs of companies and humanitarian agencies that work abroad in poverty alleviation schemes, and*
- *this sidelining of culture within the communities these organisations are claiming to help can be counter-productive.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to stress the need for these companies and humanitarian agencies to take into account the culture of the host country subject to also respecting universal human rights values.

## Human rights of religious minorities

UNA-UK:

- *notes that 2008 was the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and*
- *believes that the abuse of human rights on the grounds of religion is still prevalent in many areas of the world.*

UNA-UK strongly recommends that the UN Human Rights Council continues to pursue issues relating to the human rights of religious minorities, and of those with no religion, with unremitting vigour.

## **3. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) & Sustainable Development**

### Climate change – UK policy & resources

UNA-UK:

- *reaffirms its current policy on climate change, and*
- *welcomes the UK Climate Change Act (2008) and the UK government's initiation of a debate in the UN Security Council in 2007.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) invest heavily in green technology and energy generation, and in encouraging the reduction of carbon footprints,
- (ii) strongly influence all industries by giving incentives for reducing carbon emissions, and
- (iii) implement principles of environmental sustainability.

### Climate change – Copenhagen

- *Convinced that climate change represents the greatest current threat to humankind,*
- *persuaded that the need to take action to reduce carbon emissions is even more urgent now than it was thought to be a year ago, and*
- *recognising that political imperatives make it virtually impossible in a democracy for a government to introduce tough measures that are necessary for the long-term because of short-term preoccupations with electoral advantage,*

UNA-UK calls on all the main UK political parties to agree on essential measures that need to be introduced now to combat climate change so that the policies agreed on would be above party politics.

Such a consensus would strengthen the government's advocacy position at the UN-mediated conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, and could create a political template for other countries to consider.

## Climate change

*UNA-UK notes the:*

- *increasing seriousness of science-based projections as to the prospects for climate change;*
- *finding at the recent Copenhagen meeting of climate scientists that there is ‘a significant risk that many of the trends will accelerate, leading to an increasing risk of abrupt or irreversible climatic shifts’;*
- *potential damage caused to less developed countries and poorer communities; and*
- *economic consequences of regional devastation to the global economy as a whole.*

UNA-UK calls on the UN General Assembly to:

- (i) consider the potential human consequences of climate change, in particular
  - large-scale refugee flows,
  - large-scale and sustained relief programmes,
  - new patterns of exposure to contagious diseases, and
  - conflicts over resources such as water and cultivable land; and
- (ii) reaffirm the role of the UN in ensuring that these challenges will be addressed within a democratic and multilateral framework.

## Conflict over resources

*UNA-UK:*

- *shares the concern of the former UK chief scientist Sir David King that there is an increasing danger of international conflict arising from population growth, consumption of finite natural resources and climate change in which “large powerful nations will secure the resources for their own people at the expense of others”, and*
- *agrees with the current chief scientist Prof. John Beddington that “there are dramatic problems out there, particularly with water and food, but energy also, and they are all intimately connected”.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to take a lead in pressing UN institutions to initiate coordinated global action to:

- (i) develop sustainable supplies of resources,
- (ii) moderate demand to sustainable levels,
- (iii) avoid the dangers of conflict over resources,
- (iv) consider urgently the implication of population growth and means of stabilisation, and
- (v) sustain and increase support for the efforts of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

## The international financial system

*UNA-UK recognises:*

- *that the current international financial turmoil should signal the end of the dominance of neo-liberal ideologies in the quest for economic growth,*
- *the opportunity this offers for the adoption of sound strategies backed by political will and international action to ensure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and further progress thereafter,*
- *that among the key issues are the redistribution of income to increase the purchasing power of the poor; greater and sustained investment in agricultural and rural development; and,*

*re-balancing investment in favour of public services in health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and low-cost environmentally-sound housing; and,*

- *that the new order and regulatory processes to be worked for to control international capital movements, instruments of investment and speculation in markets for commodities, currencies and other assets must challenge what the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) calls in its recent report 'market fundamentalist laissez-faire'.*

UNA-UK:

- (i) welcomes the 'Put People First' campaign – of which UNA-UK is a member – in its efforts to strengthen and reform the international trade and financial systems, and
- (ii) urges the UK government to:
  - place at the forefront of its efforts to achieve reform of the IMF and World Bank, the need to maintain impetus for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and to ensure that developing countries are involved in finding the solutions that are sought to deal with the global crisis; and
  - achieve these aims through commitment to the Global New Green Deal proposed by UNEP.

### Africa in the global economic crisis

UNA-UK:

- *notes that Africa currently represents only 3% of world trade and, amidst the present global economic crisis, Africa's growth dropped from 6% in 2007 to 5.1% in 2008 and is forecast to decline to 4.1% in 2009, as stated in a 2009 report by the UN Economic Commission for Africa,*
- *is disappointed at the overall lack of sustained improvement in conditions in so many African states, in spite of the searching analysis and recommendations of the 2005 Report of the Commission for Africa ('Our Common Interest') and the efforts of the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development; and*
- *is therefore concerned that all the improvements seen towards achieving the MDGs are in danger of being wiped out.*

UNA-UK urges:

- (i) the G20 nations to include the continent in their stimulus plans and to avoid any temptation to revert to protectionism, and
- (ii) the UN to devise more effective methods of ensuring nations fulfil their pledged aid and relief commitments to developing nations, especially in Africa.

### Regulation of tax havens system

UNA-UK:

- *notes with concern the damage caused to the global economy by the use of unregulated tax havens by very rich individuals and companies, and particularly the loss of income to developing countries as a result of tax avoidance or evasion; and*
- *welcomes international action to remove tax avoidance via the use of tax havens, and the recognition of the adverse impact of tax abuse on the public sector and services to the poor, especially in developing economies by depriving them of tax revenue.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- (i) support proposals for all countries to introduce measures to require them to reveal these accounts so that nowhere is a hiding place from fair taxation,
- (ii) take action against those who do not cooperate, and
- (iii) work with other governments and international institutions to establish an international agreement at the UN that:
  - has the appropriate robust regulatory authority, machinery and resources to ensure its efficient and effective implementation, and
  - stipulates full automatic information-sharing between tax jurisdictions.

## Honey bees

*UNA-UK recognises:*

- *the serious dangers to food production in the world caused by the massive reduction of the honey-bee population, which poses a serious threat to the food chain in many countries, and*
- *the UK government's initial commitment of £10 million into researching the causes of this reduction.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government and the UN to inject further necessary resources into researching the causes of the reduction in the honey bee population and to reverse this very serious situation.

## Marine pollution

*UNA-UK recognises the massive accumulation in the world's seas of many polluting agents, including for example the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of plastic and other man-made items in the sea, on the seabed, and on coast-lines around the world, that pose a threat to sea-life, and the human food-chain.*

UNA-UK calls on the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to work together to:

- (i) take the necessary steps to identify polluters, and
- (ii) establish enforcement mechanisms.

## UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) – Biosphere Reserves Programme

*UNA-UK:*

- *welcomes the UNESCO MAB Reserves programme and the 2008 Madrid Action Plan's aim to make biosphere reserves the 'principal internationally designated areas dedicated to sustainable development in the 21st century',*
- *notes that biosphere reserves with a significant urban component are particularly pertinent to the UK,*
- *congratulates the UK MAB programme for also considering these particular issues of urban areas as a focal point and setting up an Urban Forum, and*
- *also welcomes the UK government's contribution by supporting the secretariat of the UK MAB Committee.*

UNA-UK urges the UK government to:

- (i) intensify its support by raising awareness of the UNESCO MAB programme within national and local government, and
- (ii) exhort other central government departments and local government to establish links with UK MAB by recommending that Biosphere Reserves be favourably considered for funding programmes, for example by the European Union.

### Recreating 'Health for All'

*UNA-UK, updating its 2008 policy in support of the World Health Organization (WHO) Renewed Global Policy, notes:*

- *that the improvements made since WHO declared its 'Health for All' (HFA) policy in 1978 are now marred by failing healthcare systems, and*
- *that, therefore, WHO has renewed its HFA policy to redevelop healthcare as comprehensive systems capable of achieving equity and social justice.*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to lead in implementing this by:

- (i) keeping its 2005 promise to deliver development aid through 10-year plans where 50% goes to improving health, education, water and sanitation, and social protection services;
- (ii) strengthening WHO's financial and global governance so as to coordinate 'vertical' and 'horizontal' programmes, and donor inputs, with the healthcare systems of the aid-recipient countries;
- (iii) implementing its Global Health Strategy to develop national healthcare systems as well as dealing with individual diseases; and
- (iv) accepting these aims is part of the solution to current global problems.

### Consolidated Solar Power Supergrid

*UNA-UK notes that:*

- *technology now exists and is operational, to produce sufficient energy from Consolidated Solar Power (CSP) operating in the desert areas of the world, to provide sufficient electrical energy for the world's needs,*
- *the problem of distribution is now, for the first time, able to be solved through a Super Grid of HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) cables which would lose only 10% of their energy over a distance of 3000 km, and*
- *the promotion and introduction of such a Super Grid carrying energy created by CSP would mean the possibility of providing clean and, except for the cost of construction and maintenance, free energy to the peoples of the world, also giving them the ability to provide water through desalination.*

UNA-UK:

- (i) urges the UK government and UN agencies to promote actively the cause for an international accord to develop such a super grid, and
- (ii) recommends to the UNA-UK Board of Directors that UNA-UK sign up to the international accord.

## Kenya

*UNA-UK notes that if Kenya is to maintain safe water and food supplies, and continue to build an education system for all, it is imperative that a strong and stable government is maintained in the country for the health and well being of its people.*

UNA-UK calls on the UN to ensure that the recommendations of the report of the Waki Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence are carried out.

## Women in politics

*UNA-UK:*

- *notes with concern the low level of women's representation in national governments in both developed and developing countries as revealed in the 2008 Millennium Development Goals Report, and*
- *is reminded that successful organisations and companies have good representation of women on their boards.*

UNA-UK urges:

- (i) UNA-UK branches to work with women's organisations in this country and internationally to address this issue and its connection with the slow advancement of women's rights, and
- (ii) the UK government to promote through UN agencies and NGOs action to identify how this situation may be quickly reversed.

## Sport for UNICEF

UNA-UK commends Barcelona Football Club for wearing UNICEF shirts in the final of the UEFA Champions League and their willingness to donate US\$10 million to UNICEF, and commends this initiative to other football clubs in Europe and elsewhere.

## **4. UN reform & the promotion of multilateralism**

### International Criminal Court

*Noting that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been subject to some political criticism for initiating proceedings against the Sudanese Head of State,*

UNA-UK calls on the UK government to:

- (i) use its influence in the European Union, and at the UN, to strengthen the ICC, so that persistent violators of human rights and international law are brought to justice, regardless of their political status,
- (ii) continue its support for the independence of the ICC,
- (iii) continue to encourage further respect for, and acceptance of, the ICC's jurisdiction in accordance with the Rome Statute, and
- (iv) encourage states that have yet to do so, in particular the United States, to accede to the Statute at the earliest possible time.

## Gender architecture

### *UNA-UK:*

- *recognises the work that has been done by the UN on behalf of the world's women since 1945 – including the Commission on the Status of Women, the establishment of UNIFEM, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing;*
- *notes with regret that the current UN system is failing women because its primary projects for promoting women's issues (the UN Fund for Women, UNIFEM, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues) have become excessively fragmented and are under-resourced;*
- *recognises that a consolidated UN body, adequately funded and led by an authoritative person, would be better able to mainstream women's issues into all UN activities, thus helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, all of which depend on the enabling of women;*
- *welcomes proposals to set up such an entity at the UN to address women's issues in order to overcome the current fragmentation of the UN's work in this area; and*
- *welcomes the considerable support these proposals have received from governments and non-governmental organisations.*

### *UNA-UK:*

- calls for the establishment of a consolidated UN Agency for Women to improve coordination on women's issues in order to give women a much higher profile, importance and effective voice in the UN system, and to strongly encourage all UN member states to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820;*
- urges the international community to ensure that this consolidated agency is adequately funded to ensure its effectiveness, and emphasises that the establishment of such an agency should not relieve other international agencies of the need to mainstream such issues in implementing policies;*
- urges the UK government to make this a priority when the General Assembly reconvenes in the autumn; and*
- calls on those countries that have acceded to UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, including Pakistan and Afghanistan, to reaffirm their commitment to the convention, and to ensure its implementation.*

## Actions to be taken by the UN Security Council

### *UNA-UK notes:*

- *the urgent need to make operational the 'responsibility to protect' norm through its consistent application to existing and potential situations of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and*
- *the recommendations contained in the January 2009 report of the UN Secretary-General entitled 'Implementing the responsibility to protect'.*

UNA-UK urges the permanent members of the UN Security Council to refrain from utilising their veto in the consideration of situations involving these four specific crimes and violations, and the sanctioning of any consequent action by the Security Council.



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