

## UN APPG e-newsletter: October 2010

By Georgina Banks, UN APPG Coordinator

Thank you for joining the UN APPG. It is encouraging that so many Parliamentarians recognise the vital role the UN plays in addressing the threats and challenges faced by the world today. The UN is unique – it is the only organisation with the legitimacy and representative authority to provide a framework to tackle global problems such as poverty, conflict and climate change. It is therefore crucial that within the UK parliamentary context UNA-UK facilitates debate, discussion, and understanding on key multilateral issues.

### WHAT IS UNA-UK

UNA-UK act as the secretariat for the UN APPG and is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the UN. UNA-UK also has a nationwide grassroots membership base, which is active in supporting a strong, credible and effective UN.

We pursue this mission by:

- raising awareness of the UN and its work;
- stimulating thought and debate on how to strengthen the UN to tackle 21st Century challenges;
- lobbying for action on peace and security, international development, climate change and human rights;
- educating young people about the UN;
- campaigning for strong UK support for the UN and its agencies;
- equipping our supporters, members and the public to further these aims.

As part of the annual parliamentary lobby campaign – *Lobby for the UN* – UNA-UK focuses on two key policy priorities each year. The focus of this year's campaign, launched on 24 October, will be nuclear non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament, and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The aim of *Lobby for the UN* is to promote national dialogue on international issues by equipping our members and supporters to lobby effectively on these key policy priorities. These two lobby themes will also influence a large part of the work carried out at a central level by UNA-UK in the coming year.

To find out more about UNA-UK, please visit [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

### NEW INITIATIVES

#### *New monthly e-newsletter*

This is a new initiative to keep you updated on upcoming events and developments within the UN and UNA-UK.

#### *APPG meetings*

Meetings of the UN APPG have traditionally been held two or three times a year to host high-level speakers, often from the UN system. The APPG will continue to host such meetings, but additional meetings will also be held. A series of briefing meetings for Parliamentarians and their staff is planned, beginning with an introductory briefing on 3 November to give an overview of the key issues on the UN's agenda as it celebrates its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This meeting will also look at the support that is available to Parliamentarians through UNA-UK, such as background briefings on specific issues.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

#### *Wednesday 3 November (4pm, Committee Room 1)*

UN APPG informal briefing for MPs, Peers and their staff on the key issues currently facing the United Nations, such as climate change, peacekeeping, the Millennium Development Goals and UN reform.

#### *Tuesday 30 November (11.30am, Committee Room 18)*

Joint meeting with the APPG on Global Security and Non-Proliferation - Ambassador Susan Burk, Special Representative of the US President for Nuclear Non-proliferation, will speak on '*The Prospects for Nuclear Non-proliferation beyond 2010: A US Perspective*'

#### *Wednesday 1 December (3.00pm, Committee Room 4)*

Joint meeting with the APPG on Global Security and Non-proliferation - Mr Li Hong, Secretary-General of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, will speak on '*China's Future Role in Nuclear Non-proliferation*'

#### *Late November – date tbc*

An expert briefing on the MDGs followed by Q&A. Looking at the successes to date and what still needs to be done. All Parliamentarians and staff are welcome.

### RECENT UN DEVELOPMENTS

### *UN Security Council*

From 1 January 2011, five new elected members will join the Security Council for a two-year term. Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal and South Africa will join Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria on the Council, along with the five permanent member states (Britain, France, Russia, China and the USA). This could be a taste of things to come as five key contenders for new permanent seats on the Council, Brazil, Nigeria, India, South Africa and Germany, will all have seats on the Council.

### *UN Human Rights Council*

A two-stage review of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) begins this month. A review of the functioning of the HRC by a working group of members will constitute the first stage, while stage two will see the UN General Assembly consider the status of the HRC within the UN system, including whether it should become one of the UN's principal organs. The HRC was established in 2006 to replace the much-maligned Commission on Human Rights.

### *MDG Summit*

World leaders unanimously renewed their commitment to the MDGs during the three-day summit in New York last month, pledging their support for the adoption of a global action plan to achieve the eight anti-poverty goals by their 2015 target date. MDG successes, such as primary school education and access to clean water, were celebrated, while the key areas in which progress has fallen short, such as maternal mortality, were highlighted. A key commitment to emerge from the summit was a pledge by governments and private aid investors to put \$40 billion over the next five years towards accelerating progress on women's and children's health initiatives.

### *UN Women*

Established earlier this year, the new UN body, 'UN Women', merges four UN agencies: UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW). It is expected to become operational in January 2011 and will have an annual budget of at least \$500 million. It will be led by Michelle Bachelet, former president of Chile.

31 October also marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 which was the first formal and legal document from the UN that required parties in a conflict to respect women's rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction.

### *Biodiversity*

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity is meeting in Japan this month. The key focus of the meeting is to review the 2010 biodiversity targets set in 2002 aimed at reducing the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide.

Upcoming dates:

- 29 November - 10 December: UN Climate Change Conference, Cancún.
- 10 December: Human Rights Day.

Please contact Georgina Banks, Coordinator of the UN APPG, if you would like any more information on the UN APPG or UNA-UK, or if you would be interested in getting more involved with the group.

We would also be very interested in feedback from members (or their staff) on this inaugural newsletter.