



UNA-UK Policy Conference 2013

On 27 April 2013, UNA-UK held its biennial Policy Conference. Over 150 members from around the country took part in the event, debating matters of concern to the United Nations and identifying issues on which the Association could take action over the coming two years.

The day's proceedings were based on submissions from members gathered ahead of the conference, with discussions grouped according to UNA-UK's agreed policy programmes and priorities, as contained in its 2011-15 Strategic Plan:

- A safer world: peace and security
- A fairer world: human rights, humanitarian and social issues
- A sustainable world: international development and environment
- Cross-cutting themes: UN institutions, gender and population.

The following points represent the views and outcomes of members present. They will be presented to the UNA-UK Board of Directors.

As part of a broader debate on issues of international peace and security, the Conference expressed and agreed the following points.

1. In relation to the '*Arms trade and the use of unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAVs)*', the Conference urges UNA-UK to call on the UK Government to:-
 - a) Promote rapid ratification and robust implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) agreed in New York in April 2013 by all UN Member States.
 - b) Interpret the treaty as applying to the widest possible range of conventional arms and ammunition.
 - c) Actively promote and press for the treaty to specifically include and cover the development, use and proliferation of UCAVs and autonomous weapons.
 - d) Refrain from and seek to prevent arms transfers when a substantial risk exists that arms will be used in breach of international humanitarian law or international human rights law.
 - e) Put in place ATT monitoring, reporting and recording mechanisms that are both transparent and public.

- f) Put in place robust mechanisms for ensuring accountability and responsibility, especially in relation to the use of UCAVs and autonomous weapons.
2. In relation to '*Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation*', the Conference urges UNA-UK to call on the UK Government to:-
- a) Honour its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by
 - I. Cancelling the replacement of Trident submarines,
 - II. Abandoning the nuclear weapons programme altogether, and
 - III. Supporting a Nuclear Weapons Convention to outlaw all nuclear weapons globally
 - b) Implement Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with alacrity, including through the publication of a timetable for UK nuclear disarmament and the promotion of disarmament by other nuclear powers, including the permanent members of the Security Council.
 - c) Support efforts to find a peaceful solution to the situation surrounding Iran's nuclear programme, including encouraging the UK Government to work with its international partners on direct talks with Iran to seek a compromise that could include allowing Iran to enrich uranium to a capped amount and for Iran to agree to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections.
 - d) Help promote a Middle East nuclear-weapons-free-zone.
3. On matters relating to '*Human security, dignity and the responsibility to protect (R2P)*', the Conference urges UNA-UK to;
- a) Call upon the UN and its Members States to put more resources into activities in support of 'Pillar 2' of R2P, which stipulates that the international community should "encourage and help" states to exercise their responsibility to protect, including through capacity-building and assistance to states that are under stress before crises and conflicts break out.
 - b) Call on the UN Security Council and its members to ensure that coercive measures in support of 'Pillar 3' of R2P (which states that the international community has a responsibility to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other means if a state fails to protect its populations from the most heinous crimes) are only taken as a last resort, i.e. after all conflict resolution and peacemaking processes have been

exhausted, to ensure the protection of civilian populations, in accordance with the principles of international law.

- c) Call on the UK Government and UN member states, in response to the continuing failure of the Assad regime to protect the Syrian people from the state's attacks on their lives and human rights, to:-
 - I. Accept and re-emphasise international responsibility to respond in accordance with R2P principles to assist the Syrian state and its peoples.
 - II. Continue to strengthen mechanisms to achieve this via negotiation and dialogue, while recognising that collective use of force (under chapter VII of the UN Charter) remains a possibility, as part of the R2P process of putting in place a democratic outcome that provides the Syrian people with the conditions and provisions of which they are currently denied.
- d) Call upon the UK Government to clarify its position on the use of torture, extraordinary rendition and complicity, whether directly or indirectly, in the carrying-out of these practices.
- e) Call upon the UK Government to seriously reconsider its plans to introduce 'closed material procedures' into all civil proceedings, in the interests of responsible, open, transparent and accountable government.

4. In relation to the '*ongoing situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories*', the Conference urges UNA-UK to call on the UK Government to:-

- a) Actively and urgently engage with international partners to achieve a permanent, just, lasting and comprehensive two-state peace settlement between Israel and Palestine, which includes final status arrangements, and respects relevant international law, conventions and UN resolutions.
- b) Work with the Israeli government towards a two-state solution within or near the 1967 borders.
- c) Prioritise the following in its lobbying on the ongoing situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories:
 - I. Formal recognition of the human rights / humanitarian situation;
 - II. Legal arguments on issues such as the Gaza blockade, West Bank settlements, the status of occupation etc;
 - III. Promoting a new peace initiative

- d) Call on Israel to comply with the many UN resolutions calling on it to cease its illegal settlements programme as a sign of good faith
- e) Offer a venue for new negotiations, providing that they are entered into in good faith by all sides
- f) Call on both sides to refrain from acts of violence in the run-up to any new negotiations.

As part of a broader debate on issues of international development, sustainability and the environment, the Conference expressed and agreed the following points.

1. On matters relating to '*Women's rights, security and an end to violence against women*' conference urges UNA-UK to:-
 - a) Call on UN Member States to uphold the provisions in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which affirms unequivocally the equal rights of men and women.
 - b) Emphasise that violence against women and girls stems from gender inequality, and that the lower societal status accorded to females in many countries, either formally or informally, through laws or attitudes, must be addressed.
 - c) Promote the full control of women over what happens to their bodies, in line with Article 3 of the UDHR, which affirm that everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person. This should include the following issues:
 - I. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM),
 - II. Forced marriage or forced sex,
 - III. Child marriage,
 - IV. Gender based domestic violence,
 - V. Female infanticide or gender-based abortion.
 - d) Actively promote full access, for all women, to family planning and maternal health services.
 - e) Advocate the conditions for full equality, where women are free to go outside their homes to further their education and access employment opportunities in a safe and secure environment.
2. On issues relating to '*The future of international development*', the Conference urges UNA-UK to:-

- a) Welcome the progress made on fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its Millennium Summit in 2000 and due to be met by 2015.
 - b) Reaffirm its belief in the MDGs as a central feature of an international development programme and support fully the planning and implementation of a new round of Goals
 - c) Seek to ensure that any shortfalls in reaching the existing Goals are built into the new programme from 2015, so that they are not prematurely abandoned
 - d) Advocate that the new Goals should maintain as their primary focus the need to eliminate extreme poverty, and that gender equality and democracy be included
 - e) Make certain that the new Goals are adequately supported through infrastructural requirements and resourcing, with funds to be pledged in advance of agreement.
 - f) Urge David Cameron (as one of three Co-Chairs of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda) to demonstrate energetic personal leadership within the UK and amongst fellow G20 and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development states, to provide the necessary acceleration in progress and to both offer and deliver funding streams to guarantee that this important sequence of programmes is sustained into the future.
3. On issues relating to *'The 1992 Rio Earth Summit, Kyoto Protocol, Rio+10, Rio+20 and a global climate agreement.'*, conference urges UNA-UK to:-
- a) Support and press for, in the strongest terms possible,
 - I. A reopening of debate on the introduction of means to enforce global environmental agreements
 - II. The setting up an International Court for Environment.
 - III. Mechanisms to determine and assign accountability.
 - b) Welcome the creation of the UN Environment Programme's International Advisory Council for the Advancement of Justice, Governance and Law for Enforcement Sustainability, and of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice which this year looked at crimes "that have a significant impact on the environment".
 - c) Support the thrust of the demand to define "ecocide" as a "crime against Peace"

- d) Call for a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development which will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the earth's ecosystem
 - e) Call on the UK Government to demonstrate leadership and ensure progress in negotiating a global climate treaty, due to be agreed by 2015
 - f) Call on the UK Government to set an example by
 - I. Effecting a sustainable and ongoing reduction of its CO2 emissions
 - II. Vigorously promoting the increased use of renewable energy in the UK.
4. On issues relating to '*Population and hunger as imperatives in sustaining achievement of the MDGs*', conference urges UNA-UK to:-
- a) Advocate that the post-2015 development agenda recognises that reproductive healthcare is key not only to achievement of all MDGs but also to sustainable development and environmental conservation.
 - b) Work with appropriate UN bodies to ensure that the question of population growth is identified as integral to the post-2015 development agenda.
 - c) Request UN Member States to establish national population policies that address the impact of bio-diversity and the ecological footprint of each country.
 - d) Prioritise the global availability of better education, family planning, contraception and abortion for women who wish it, through the Commission on Population and Development and other appropriate bodies, and the empowerment of women by giving them control of their own fertility.
 - e) To promote the financial independence of women, especially in the developing world.
 - f) Call on the Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron, to use the UK presidency of the G8 group of nations in 2013 to improve governance, improve food distribution and act to end global hunger.
 - g) Encourage UNA-UK members to give their full support to Enough Food for Everyone (IF campaign) and other agencies - recognising the work they do and the challenges they face.