

## A sustainable future?

**35 million**  
new houses are  
needed globally  
each year

Emissions  
have increased by  
**40%**  
since 1990

**75%**  
of worldwide fish  
stocks are over- or  
fully exploited

Each year  
**13 million**  
hectares of forest  
are cut down

**150+**  
species become  
extinct every  
day

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 decisionmakers and opinion-shapers to promote UN goals
- Stimulate debate and action on ways to make the UN more effective

*Athenaeum Hotel, London. The design signals what might be to come in terms of urban agriculture and 'skyscraper farming'. Models of current and planned developments were displayed at the UN climate conference in Durban last December © Andrew Butterson/Alamy*



**UNA-UK**

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## New World online

This issue's web exclusive content includes:

- » Ian Bogle on wind turbines in buildings
- » Anders Brudevoll on the financial transactions tax
- » Marcia Glass on healthcare in developing countries
- » Tena Kozic on co-operatives
- » Beth Summers on the World Development Report
- » David Thomas on the eurozone crisis
- » Holly Ulsan on the joys of Model UN
- » Sam Willingdale on the 'blue economy'

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## National leaders must act globally to meet our most pressing challenges – developmental and environmental as well as economic

### **Natalie Samarasinghe**

Head of Policy & Communications at UNA-UK

The last issue of *New World* invited UNA-UK members to share reflections on global events that touched their lives. The responses were inspiring, spanning the past 65 years (see pages 14–17).

Reflecting on the past 12 months, it can seem as though a decade's worth of events took place in 2011, from the toppling of four veteran African dictators to the birth of a new nation. Small wonder that politicians struggled to keep up. Some developments – notably massacres in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire – prompted concerted action. Others, like Europe's economic woes, appeared to paralyse leaders. At times, these leaders seemed bewildered by their own citizens, especially those who descended on Wall Street, Tahrir Square and Delhi's Tihar prison.

This year, domestic affairs look set to command more attention. Four of the UN Security Council's five permanent members will hold national elections (or, in the case of Russia and China, managed transitions). In Europe, governments are finding it hard to sell austerity measures to their electorates. Greek and Italian leaders have experienced at first hand the fate of many a developing country politician, forced out by Washington Consensus prescriptions. In other countries – be it Burma or Scotland – democratic deficits have been brought into sharper focus.

But, as is eloquently argued by Mark Malloch-Brown (page 20) and our Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock (right), leaders would be unwise to turn inwards. They are, in any case, unlikely to be granted the option of doing so. It is no longer enough to 'think global'; we must act global too, even if it is to the (short-term) detriment of those closer to home. The recent financial and political volatility has highlighted just how much foreign and domestic issues have now converged. Paradoxically, this has led to an increase in self-interested behaviour at a moment when challenges and opportunities require co-ordinated action. Attempts to tackle one pressing issue – the dire situation in Syria – have already been scuppered by states pursuing narrow national agendas on the Security Council.

An opportunity yet to come is the Rio+20 summit (see UN environment chief Achim

Steiner on page 8). The meeting presents a chance to demonstrate that people, planet and prosperity are not mutually exclusive and that we can deliver improved living standards sustainably. Too many policymakers and activists continue to rely on a narrative of gloom. Progress is ignored or denounced as too little too late, leading to despair and a lack of creativity in devising solutions. We are left wondering if, not how, we will address problems.

## **Too many policymakers and activists continue to rely on a narrative of gloom**

The climate debate often falls into this trap. Instead of pretending that we can escape unscathed if only we can persuade the world's governments and peoples to change course, we should accept that climate change is already happening and that, as so often happens, the poorest are bearing the brunt (see UNA-UK Executive Director Phil Mulligan on page 23). We must prepare for the effects of a warming climate, rising sea levels and extreme weather events. And we should seize the opportunities that these changes will bring, such as the chance to build different types of economies and strengthen environmental management, urban planning and healthcare (see pages 9, 12 and 24).

We must also look at better ways to measure progress. At Rio, governments will consider a set of "sustainable development goals". These could represent a way forward, especially if they incorporate lessons from the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and don't ignore human rights and security concerns (see pages 10 and 11).

All those interested in contributing ideas and approaches should take part in our UN Forum on 14 July (see back page for details). The event is a must for anyone who believes that promoting sustainable, equitable and peaceful development is both possible and necessary. ●

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The deadline for submission of material for the next issue of *New World* is noon on 16 March 2012. All submissions should be typed and sent by email where possible. Photos should ideally be 300dpi resolution. The next issue will cover the period April 2012 to June 2012.

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*The sustainability challenge:*  
**Sir Jeremy Greenstock sets the scene for this issue of New World**

Those of us who are most concerned with the state of the world – and you wouldn't be reading *New World* if you weren't – worry about the effect of the global economic crisis on poorer countries. Since the turn of the century, events have reinforced nationalistic tendencies and the burden of foolishly acquired debt was bound to make states even more self-interested. Now we feel poorer ourselves, what impact is this having on sustainable development?

Some of it is undoubtedly bad. Climate change negotiations are alive but not productive enough (see page 8). Traditional donor countries are finding it hard to convince their electorates to be generous towards distant peoples. NGOs are struggling to raise funds and movements like the "Make Poverty History" campaign seem to have run into the sand. In short, it appears that the global issues that trouble people's consciences in happier times become secondary when the home front is in trouble.

Fortunately, that is not the whole picture. Since 2000, the development agenda has been refreshed by two things: the Millennium Development Goals initiative and a growing sense among ordinary people that problems are shared, exemplified by both the financial and climate crises. The world may have become more selfish but 'self-interest' now has a broader definition.

There is tangible good news, too. First, as this issue of *New World* highlights, there is no shortage of practical proposals on fostering sustainable development. Second, some leading donors, and I am glad we can include the UK here, have not dropped the target of 0.7% of GDP for development assistance. They have also put more emphasis on making aid count, through improved accountability, local responsibility and programmes that have a multiplying effect, as in the health, education, agriculture and infrastructure sectors. And poorer nations increasingly recognise that the best path to growth is through trade and investment.

In the post-Cold War period, the expansion of rights and freedoms infused the international arena as much as the spread of economic opportunity. Legitimacy is no longer an abstract but a concrete force in politics, borne out graphically by the saga of Iraq. Now that economics is the headline topic, inequality has become, both within and between nations, the symptom of an unsustainable structure: the poverty gap is no longer acceptable to the majority.

The UN, for all its challenges, still stands tall for greater equality and legitimacy. (See Mark Malloch-Brown on page 20.) With the relative diminution of the West's authority, the UN has been refreshed by its role as a global norm-setter. It is a forum in which the US, China, Russia and the UK can equally be called to account on issues ranging from the use of force to sustainable development. Not everything is going in the right direction but, increasingly, there are penalties for those who block action. The world we want to see, peaceful and engaged, will not be achievable without a collective understanding on this, bottom-up and top-down.

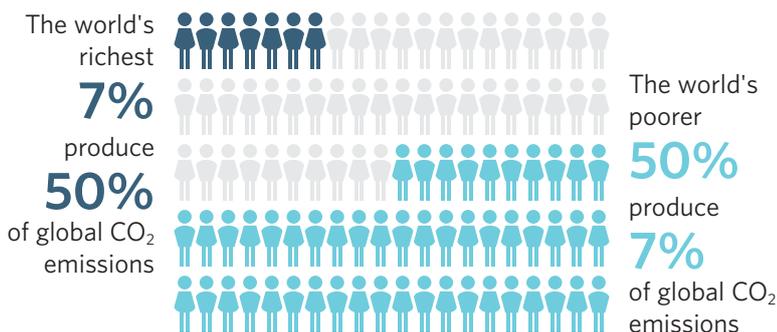
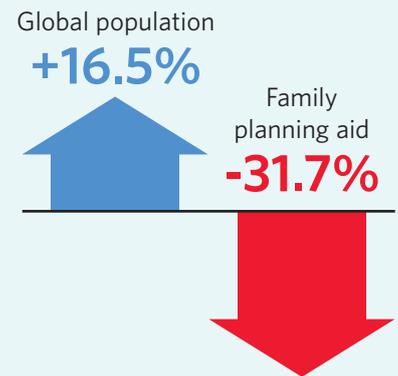
As supporters of UNA-UK and the UN, make your feelings known to policymakers. Sustainable development is both the right target and in the self-interest of us all. We must share the responsibility of promoting it.



Investment needed to avert one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

-  Family planning: **\$4.50**
-  Solar power: **\$30.00**
-  Carbon capture & storage: **\$60.00**

Percentage change between 2000 and 2010



### ● UN accepts belt-tightening

At the beginning of his second term as Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon looked back on the extraordinary events of 2011, saying the UN has “never been so needed”. Yet, in December, the General Assembly cut the organisation’s two-year budget by nearly 5% to \$5.15bn – only the second time it has done so in the last 50 years. Over the past two decades, UN biennial budgets have risen by an average of 5%. Ban has pledged more cuts, noting that “governments and people everywhere are struggling”.

## 600m

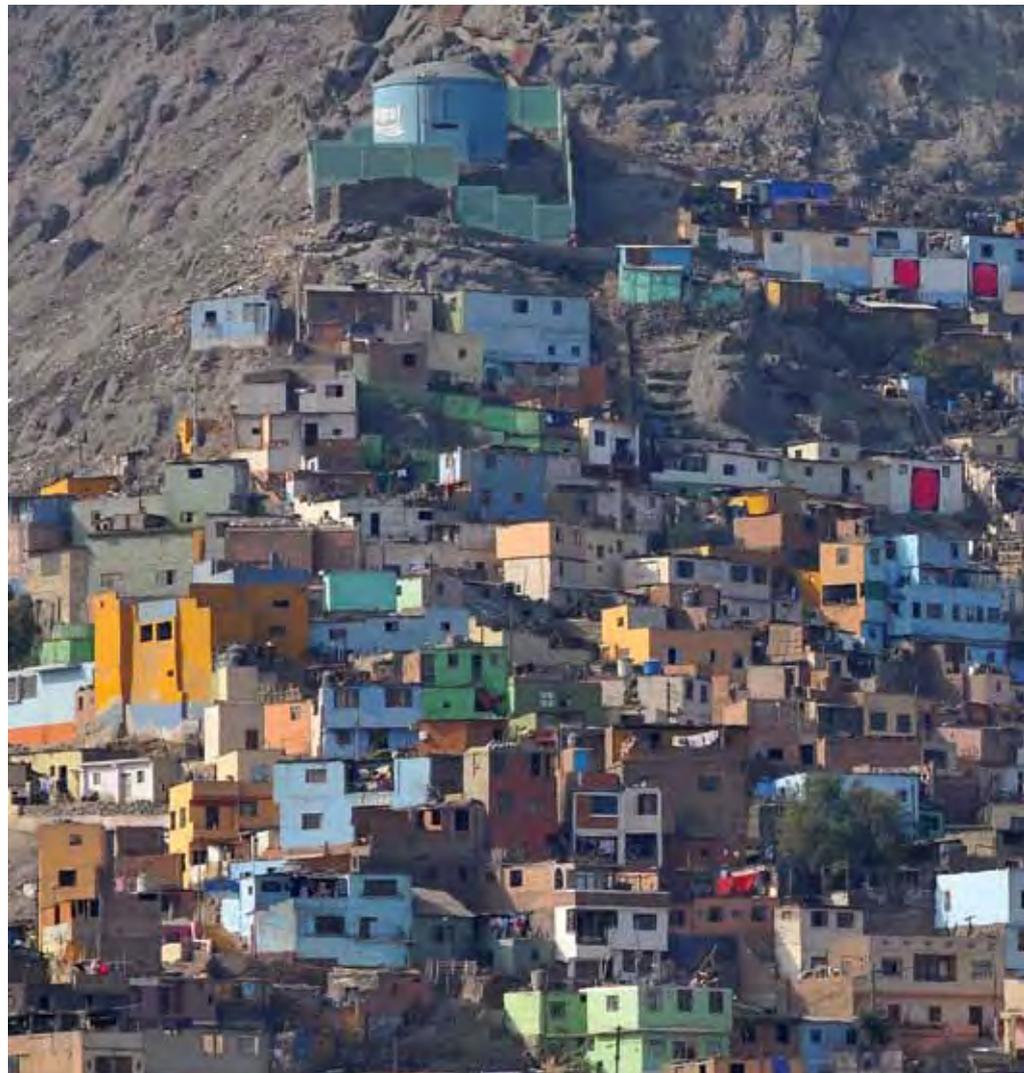
*new jobs are needed globally over the next decade to sustain economic growth and maintain social stability, according to the International Labour Organisation*

### ● Palestine joins UNESCO

On 13 December 2011, Palestine’s flag was raised at UNESCO, following its admission to the agency. While the move has no bearing on the Palestinian bid for UN membership, President Mahmoud Abbas said it represented another step towards statehood and expressed hope it would be a “good omen” for admission to other international organisations. Following the decision, the US suspended funding to UNESCO, resulting in a £112m budget shortfall. (Read John Morgan of the UK National Commission for UNESCO in *New World online*)

### ● Doors open for Burma progress

The US and the EU have indicated that they could lift sanctions on Burma if the regime releases political prisoners, investigates war crimes allegations and holds free elections. In recent months, the international community has cautiously welcomed a number of apparent political reforms and Hillary



Clinton – the first US Secretary of State to visit the country since 1955 – stepped back from calls for a UN Commission of Inquiry into war crimes, as did the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Burma, Tomás Ojea Quintana. However, Quintana, who has been visiting the Karen and other ethnic groups still at war with the government, warned that “there is a risk of backtracking” and urged sustained engagement. (Read UNA-UK’s Ben Donaldson in *New World online*)

### ● Security Council divided on Syria ...

On 4 February, Russia and China vetoed a Security Council resolution endorsing an Arab League peace plan for Syria that would involve the immediate withdrawal of armed forces from the country’s cities, a handover of power from President Assad and fresh elections. The resolution was proposed by Morocco and supported by all other Council members. Ban Ki-moon expressed regret at the outcome, saying: “It undermines the role of the UN and the international community [at a time] when the Syrian authorities must hear a

unified voice calling for an immediate end to its violence”. It is the second time that Russia and China have blocked a Security Council resolution on Syria.

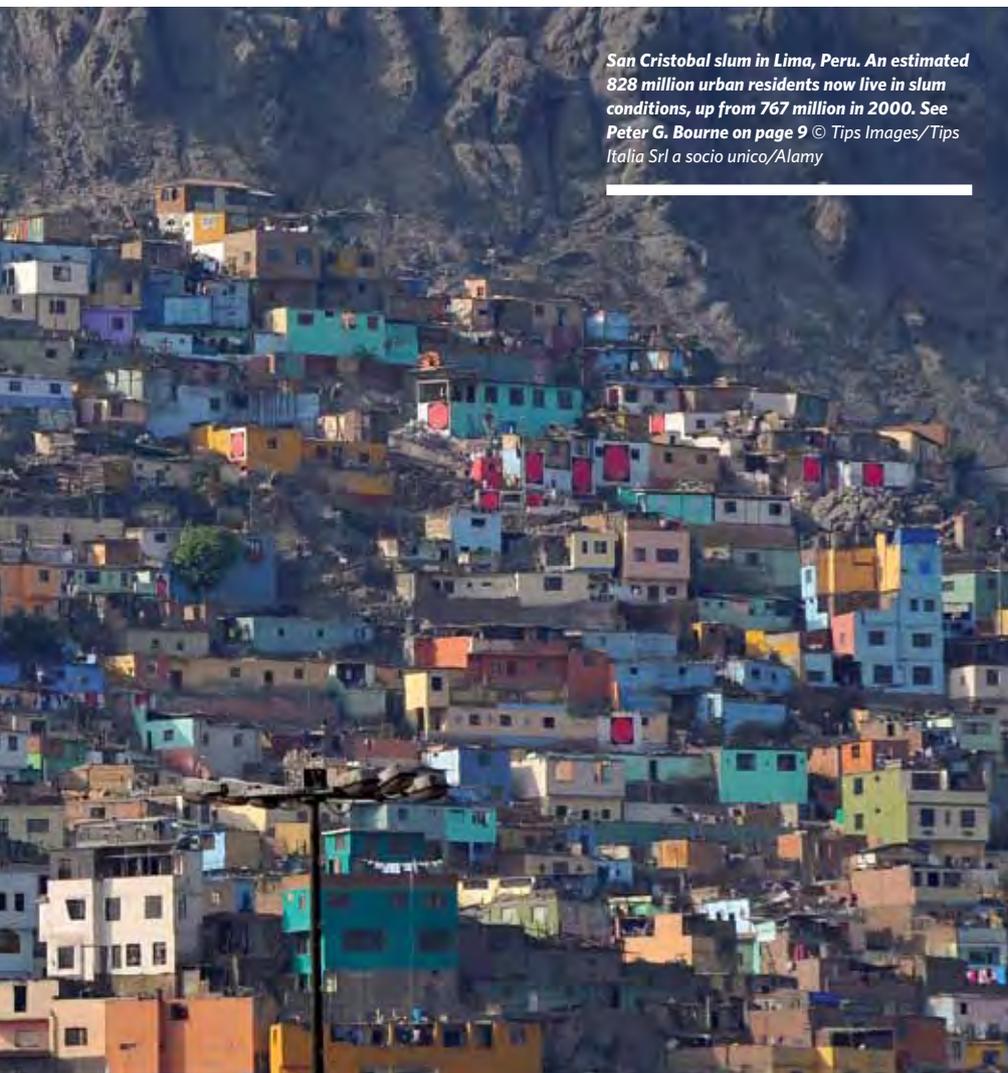
### ● ... as violence intensifies

While discussions took place in New York, civilians in the besieged city of Homs were being subjected to one of the fiercest assaults yet from Syrian government troops. The UN estimates that over 5,400 civilians have died in Syria since violence broke out last year – it officially stopped counting in January 2012, saying figures were too difficult to verify. Opposition groups say the number is over 7,000. Following the Security Council’s second failure to agree a response to the situation, several Gulf and European states withdrew their ambassadors from Damascus.

### ● Iran nuclear pressure sustained

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will make another trip to Iran,

*San Cristobal slum in Lima, Peru. An estimated 828 million urban residents now live in slum conditions, up from 767 million in 2000. See Peter G. Bourne on page 9 © Tips Images/Tips Italia Srl a socio unico/Alamy*



following what both parties described as good discussions on the country's nuclear programme in January. Last year, the IAEA released a report that concluded that some of Iran's nuclear activities could only be useful to weapons development. Tehran insists its programme is wholly peaceful. Relations between Iran and the West have deteriorated rapidly in recent months, following the storming of the British Embassy by protestors, the killing of a top Iranian nuclear scientist and Tehran's announcement that it had started to enrich uranium at the underground Fordo plant near the city of Qom. The EU and US have added a ban on Iranian oil imports to existing sanctions. Tehran has retaliated by threatening to block the movement of oil tanker traffic in the Persian Gulf. (Read UNA-UK's Gabrielle Becking in *New World online*)

#### ● Onus on China in North Korea talks

Ban Ki-moon says China has a "crucially important role" in restarting six-party nuclear talks involving itself as well as North and South Korea, Japan, Russia

and the US. The talks were launched in 2003, when North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but stalled in 2009. Commentators have speculated on whether the death of Kim Jong-il last December might herald a change in North Korea's policy. China was one of 16 states that voted against a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly last year condemning human rights abuses in North Korea.

#### ● Malaria setback

Malaria causes nearly twice as many deaths as previously believed, according to research published in *The Lancet* medical journal, which demonstrates that many adults – and not just children – die from the disease.

#### ● DRC election result challenged

Citing allegations of electoral fraud, the main opposition party in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) rejected the declaration of President Joseph Kabila's

re-election on 9 December. Both sides claimed victory after elections that were beset with delays and disorganisation. Anticipating election-related violence, MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping mission in the country, called on Kabila to exercise restraint against demonstrators and urged politicians of all parties to refrain from inciting violence. (See Correspondence, page 18)



© AFP/Getty Images

*"I am here with my little bag to collect a bit of money"*

*Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, at the World Economic Forum in Davos. She asked for extra funds to help European and struggling low- and middle-income countries, and warned that austerity programmes must be tailored to each economy rather than being imposed "across the board"*

#### ● South Sudan's conflict deepens

Violence in newly independent South Sudan has escalated and an estimated 60,000 civilians in the eastern state of Jonglei are in need of humanitarian assistance, prompting a major aid push by the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Further UN peacekeeping troops have been deployed while the Security Council has called on all those involved in the conflict to "engage in a reconciliatory peace process".

#### ● ICC activity in Africa

On 23 January 2012, the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced that four Kenyans, including two former presidential candidates, will be tried for crimes against humanity committed during the violence that followed that country's elections in 2007. Meanwhile, Mali has become the first African state to sign an agreement on enforcing ICC sentences, and the Court has criticised Malawi for hosting a visit by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who faces war crimes charges.



## *Achim Steiner welcomes the progress made on climate change in Durban but warns that much is left to do*

**If there were low expectations in the run-up to the UN climate convention negotiations in Durban last December, the outcomes proved far more significant than many had anticipated, including an agreement to negotiate a new, more inclusive treaty, and the establishment of a Green Climate Fund.**

Indeed these outcomes, the result of marathon negotiations, reflect the growing and, in some quarters, unexpected determination of countries – both developed and developing – to act collectively and, in doing so, provide a clear signal and predictability to economic planners, businesses and investors about the future of low-carbon economies.

But the outcomes forged in the South African coastal city have also left the world with some serious and urgent challenges if global temperature rise is to be kept under 2° Celsius in the 21st century.

The “Bridging the Emissions Gap” report, co-ordinated by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) with climate modelling centres across the globe and published ahead of the Durban

conference, underlined that the best available science indicates that greenhouse gas emissions need to peak before 2020.

By that time, annual global emissions need to be around 44 gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in order to have a running chance of achieving a trajectory that halves those emissions by 2050, to below 2005 levels. The report

*The core issue – whether over 190 nations can work together to bring emissions to the necessary level by 2020 – remains open*

also concluded that bridging the divide is economically and technologically doable if nations raise their emission reduction ambitions and adopt more stringent low-carbon policies across countries and sectors. The key question arising from Durban is whether what has been decided will match the science and keep the world on track for a temperature increase of below 2° Celsius.

Crucial to what was achieved at the conference was a decision by the European Union and several other countries to continue their Kyoto Protocol commitments beyond 2012, whilst all UN member states work towards a new legally binding treaty with deeper emission reductions by 2015, to come into force sometime afterwards.

The operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund, meanwhile, is a key step forward. First proposed at the 2009 UN climate conference in Copenhagen, the fund is intended to support poor countries in adapting to, and mitigating, the effects of climate change. And reaffirmation of the commitment to mobilise \$100bn for the fund by 2020 was encouraging.

In Durban, governments also agreed to create an Adaptation Committee and a process that will lead to the establishment of a Climate Technology Centre and Network, with likely funding from the Global Environment Facility, an independent financial organisation that provides grants to developing and transitional economies for projects relating to climate change and sustainability.

But the core issue – whether over 190 nations can work together to bring emissions to the necessary level by 2020 – remains open. It is a high-risk strategy for the planet and its people.

Nationally, and locally, there are some positive signs. Many governments, companies, cities and individual citizens have already begun to act. In 2010, for example, over \$210bn was invested in renewable energy. But these myriad bottom-up approaches need a top to which they can aim, and the timeline for building that top is narrowing every year. ●

*Achim Steiner is a UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme*

**The emergency services search the flooded streets of Cockermouth, Cumbria, one of many British towns affected by record rainfall in November 2009**

© Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images





### *Peter G. Bourne: urban migration means we must rethink rurally focussed approaches to development*

**By the end of this decade, the majority of the world's population will live in cities. The most dramatic urban migration is taking place in emerging-market and developing countries.**

Latin America and the Caribbean has the highest rate of urbanisation: the population living in cities almost doubled between 1950 (41%) and 2010 (80%). Eastern Africa, currently the world's least urbanised region, with some three-quarters of its people living in rural areas, is expected to reach urban-rural parity by the middle of the century. This global rise has been accompanied by the growth of impoverished peri-urban slums around cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Nairobi and Manila, which is occurring on an unprecedented scale.

Despite these striking trends, our paradigm for development aid tends to remain biased towards the needs of rural village life. We do not have well-developed models for providing development assistance in ways that will be most effective for new or growing cities. Nor have we, as yet, been able to adequately tackle the challenges posed by massive slums. Squalor, disease, unemployment and crime thrive in shanty towns – many of which are home to a million people.

The deficiencies in our approach are manifest in the UN Millennium Development Goals target for slums: to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Arguably, this target has already been met. In the 10 years since the Goals were agreed by the international community, more than 200 million people gained access to improved water, sanitation or housing and the share of urban residents living in developing-country slums declined from 39% to 33%.

But many – including the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) – have argued that the target was set far too low. In absolute terms, the number of slum dwellers continues to grow and outpace improvements. An estimated 828 million urban residents now live in slum conditions, up from 767 million in 2000. The situation is especially critical in conflict-affected

countries, where the proportion of slum dwellers has risen from 64% in 1990 to 77% in 2010. If aid is to have the impact we would like to see in coming years, it is time to rethink our priorities and approaches.

In fact, urbanisation offers opportunities as well as challenges. While major cities in industrialised nations are often burdened by outdated water and sewage systems, and archaic transportation structures and housing, cities in the developing world – especially those in emerging-market countries – have the opportunity to build metropolises created to meet human needs in a modern and efficient way. When well organised, it is far easier to bring services, economic growth and employment to large, concentrated numbers of city dwellers than to widely scattered rural populations.

***An estimated 828 million urban residents now live in slum conditions, up from 767 million in 2000***

Earlier this year, a symposium on the health of cities was sponsored by Oxford University's Green Templeton College. It brought together 50 health experts, economists, mayors and urban specialists from around the world to find solutions to these challenges. While the meeting focussed primarily on emerging-market countries, many of the conclusions reached could be applied to poorer developing nations.

The most important finding was that urban health issues should not be within the purview of health ministries alone. Transportation, environment, agriculture, urban planning, security, finance and other factors have considerable impact on people's health. It is vital therefore to have a joined-up strategy in which all ministries work together to create healthy living conditions in growing cities. Vertical integration is equally important. National policymaking, including budgetary decisions, needs to be co-ordinated with key local decisionmakers like mayors.

Policymakers should also share innovative solutions to pressing issues like reliable clean water, sanitation and food supplies. Public-private partnerships, rainwater harvesting and urban agriculture projects (where food is grown in set-aside land, including backyards, rooftops and window boxes, to reduce large-scale transportation) are being actively incorporated into urban planning by countries such as India, Cuba and China.

The UN system is, to varying degrees, leading the way in reshaping how we approach the challenges and opportunities presented by the cities of the future. In its recent "Bridging the Urban Divide" report, UN-HABITAT discusses the evolution of the 'right to the city' as a response to exclusionary development and marginalisation. More concept than legal device (although it has been enshrined in Brazilian and Ecuadorian law), the right to the city essentially advocates a rights-based approach to urban planning.

Together with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UN-HABITAT has also produced a handbook on policing urban space, aimed at low- and middle-income countries. Echoing the Oxford conference findings, one of the publication's key recommendations is for "joined-up government" as the basis for building secure environments.

Bilateral aid agencies, including the UK's Department for International Development, NGOs and funders need to examine their programmes to ensure they are aligned with such recommendations, and with the new directions the UN is suggesting in its focus on urban needs. ●

*Dr Peter G. Bourne is Senior Visiting Research Fellow at Green Templeton College, University of Oxford. He was special assistant for health issues to US President Jimmy Carter before serving as an Assistant Secretary-General at the UN. In this capacity he established and directed the UN Decade on Clean Water and Sanitation, launching the global campaign to eradicate the disease caused by guinea worm, which is now approaching complete success*

# Who is the richest of them all?

*In this issue's Talking Points we look at how the world's largest economies stack up when alternative measures of success are applied: development, equality, environmental performance, peace and security, and civil and political freedoms*

In 1990, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) launched its first "Human Development Report" with a simple statement on the premise that has guided all subsequent reports: "People are the real wealth of a nation." The aim of the report was to stimulate fresh ways of thinking about and measuring a country's progress. A key element of this was an index evaluating performance in terms of human well-being as well as economic advances. The index has had a profound impact on development programmes, shifting the focus away from national income to people-centred policies.

Twenty years later, the global economic downturn has seen a resurgence in income-centric language and 'trickle-down' economics – the idea that policies that increase national and corporate wealth will eventually benefit the poorest. Emerging economies – particularly China and India – are held up as role models for the sluggish, welfare-heavy states in continental Europe.

Here we try to present a fuller picture of countries' wealth and progress than can be seen by only looking at gross domestic product (GDP – the total market value of the goods and services that they produce). The graphic opposite displays the ranking of the world's largest economies according to a basket of measures. The lower the number, the higher the ranking, and the better the country's performance in that field; the closer together the circles, the more balanced the overall performance.

### **Economic performance**

The number shown after each country's name is its GDP ranking based on World Bank statistics for 2011. We have applied the nominal figure rather than purchasing power parity because, although the latter adjusts for differences in cost of living, it does not reflect the value of economic output in international trade and requires more estimation.

### ● **Human development**

The second measure (the numbers in the red circles) is UNDP's Human Development Index, which ranks countries according to life expectancy, literacy, education (mean and expected years of schooling) and standards of living (including income).

*The 10 highest-ranked countries in 2011 were: Norway, Australia, the Netherlands, the US, New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Germany and Sweden.*

### ● **Income equality**

The third measure (the numbers in the green circles)

ranks countries using World Bank data on the Gini coefficient, which measures how far distribution of income deviates from perfect equal distribution.

*Based on the most recent data, the 10 most equal countries are: Azerbaijan, Denmark, Japan, Iceland, Sweden, Czech Republic, Norway, Slovakia, Finland and Ukraine.*

### ● **Environmental performance**

The fourth measure (the numbers in the light blue circles) uses data from the Environmental Performance Index developed by the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network. It ranks countries using environmental and ecosystem indicators, including: air, water and indoor pollution; access to sanitation and clean drinking water; biodiversity; fisheries; forests; agriculture; pesticide use; energy sources; and carbon emissions.

*The top 10 countries in 2011 were: Switzerland, Latvia, Norway, Luxembourg, Costa Rica, France, Austria, Italy, the UK and Sweden.*

### ● **Peace and security**

The fifth measure (the numbers in the dark blue circles) ranks countries according to the Global Peace Index, which gauges domestic and international conflict, safety and security, and militarisation in 153 countries using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators, such as military expenditure, potential for terrorist acts, likelihood of violent demonstrations, relations with neighbouring countries and the level of respect for human rights. It is compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

*The most peaceful countries in 2011 were: Iceland, New Zealand, Japan, Denmark, Czech Republic, Austria, Finland, Canada, Norway and Slovenia.*

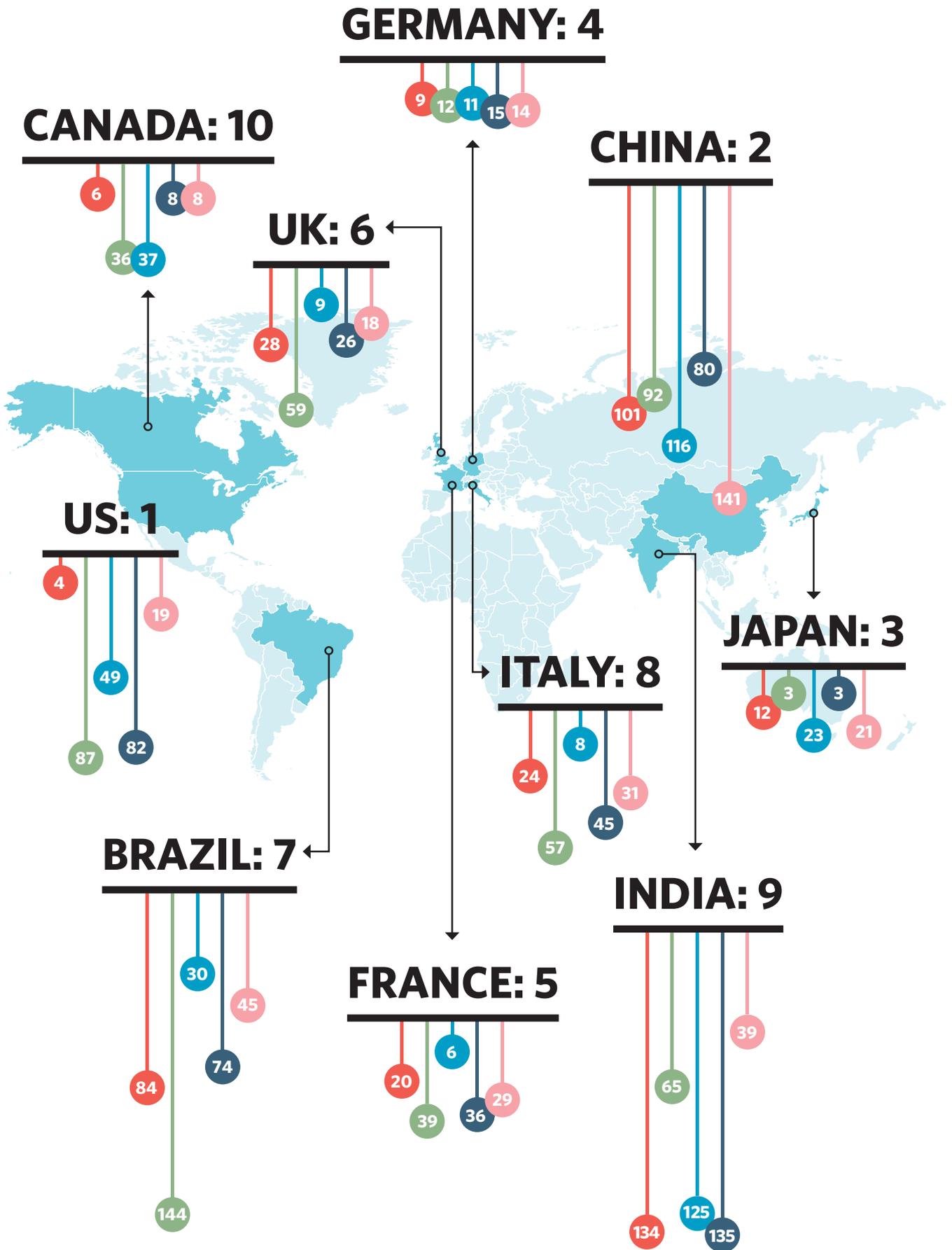
### ● **Civil and political freedoms**

The final measure (the numbers in the pink circles) is based on the Democracy Index, also compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit. It provides a snapshot of democracy in 165 independent states and two territories, which cover almost the entire population of the world. The index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture.

*In 2011, the top 10 countries were: Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Finland and the Netherlands.*

*The world's top 10 economies, ranked by gross domestic product and:*

● Human development ● Income equality ● Environmental performance ● Peace and security ● Civil and political freedoms





### Ala Alwan and Sania Nishtar on the global push against non-communicable diseases

**This is an exciting time for global health. A possible change in priorities could signal the beginning of unprecedented and much-needed action to promote health and address risks that have remained outside mainstream domestic and international public policy planning.**

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent a new frontier in the fight to improve health and development worldwide. The four types of NCDs – cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes – make the largest contribution to mortality in the majority of developing countries and economies in transition. In 2008, over 28 million people in developing countries died from NCDs. Some 8 million of these were under the age of 60.

In addition to their serious impact on health, NCDs have an adverse influence on socioeconomic development, leading to increased burdens on households, including impoverishment from long-term healthcare costs and loss of productivity. The cumulative lost output in developing nations associated with NCDs is estimated to be \$7tn between 2011 and 2025.

Fortunately, these diseases are largely preventable. Much of the premature mortality they cause can be avoided by implementing evidence-based, low-cost measures that promote access to healthcare and tackle the four modifiable risk factors shared by NCDs: tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol.

Last year, the UN General Assembly convened a high-level meeting (UNHLM) on NCDs, which produced a commitment by world leaders on taming the world's biggest killers. Not only did the meeting mobilise unprecedented political support, it also built effectively on work done to date.

In 2000, the World Health Assembly – the decision-making body of the World Health Organisation (WHO) – endorsed a three-pronged strategy for the prevention and control of NCDs: monitoring the NCD burden, its risk factors and determinants; addressing the shared risk factors; and improving access to basic

healthcare. Since then, the WHO has worked with states on developing tools to implement the strategy, including the 2003 Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; the 2004 Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health; and the 2010 Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol. In 2008, the Assembly also endorsed a five-year action plan to provide a global roadmap and guidance for establishing national programmes, with a particular focus on developing countries.

Last year's meeting recognised NCDs as a major challenge for development in the 21st century and outlined priority actions to be taken at the national level, such as institutionalising NCDs in health-planning processes and country-development plans through approaches within and outside of the health sector. It also garnered consensus on the need to foster partnerships, global monitoring, and multi-sectoral action, and to support relevant international organisations in providing technical assistance and capacity-building to developing countries.

These developments come at a time when the benefit of insights from past experience and current trends in global health can inform the global response to NCDs. A "whole-government approach" to health issues and the notion of "health in all policies"; emphasis on universal health coverage as an end and the resurrection of primary healthcare as a means to this end; lessons from scaling up HIV care; and burgeoning technology, in particular "mHealth" – health and medical practices supported by mobile devices – all are relevant to shaping this response. Discussions on NCDs now accord attention to accountability, with greater emphasis on learning from the Millennium Development Goals experience and on aid effectiveness norms – increasingly recognised as tools to build country capacity.

The range of normative instruments, diversity of stakeholder networks and insights from past health initiatives provide fertile ground from which to mount an effective response to



**The WHO estimates 80,000-100,000 children start smoking every day** © AFP/Getty Images

NCDs. But in order to have impact, governments must translate the commitments expressed during the UNHLM into concrete action. So too must other stakeholders. Civil society and non-governmental organisations played an important role in the lead-up to the meeting and are now preparing for a more effective role in delivering the challenging agenda contained in its outcome document. The private sector, including the food and non-alcoholic beverage and the pharmaceutical industries, has also been given clear responsibilities. Higher levels of joint work and co-ordination should replace competition and fragmented initiatives.

Whilst opportunities abound, the threat of inaction also looms. With a global economic crisis underway and competing priorities, including a pressing environmental sustainability agenda, international attention can waver, especially if various NCD factions stand divided. It is critical that governments and other stakeholders begin delivering now and remain committed to the vision expressed at the UN last September. ●

*Dr Ala Alwan is Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health at the World Health Organisation. Dr Sania Nishtar is Founder and President of Heartfile, a leading NGO based in Pakistan that focusses on health policies and systems*



## *Adekeye Adebajo discusses the role the UN has played in peacekeeping in Africa, from Suez to South Sudan*

**About 70% of the UN's 100,000 peacekeepers are currently deployed in Africa, home to seven of its 15 missions. Looking back at UN peacekeeping on the continent over the last five decades, three factors have been critical to success: the willingness of belligerents to co-operate with peacekeepers; regional support for peace processes; and an alignment of the interests of the five veto-wielding UN Security Council permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK and the US) with conflict resolution efforts.**

This last factor is particularly illustrative. The first armed UN peacekeeping mission – a face-saving response to the 1956 attack on Egypt by Britain, France and Israel, denounced by both the US and the Soviet Union – demonstrated how powerful Security Council members can shape mission outcomes for better or worse, a pattern replicated throughout Africa.

In the north-west of the continent, the UN's longstanding efforts to conduct a self-determination referendum in Western Sahara have been obstructed by Morocco with Franco-American support. In west Africa, the selectivity of the Council's permanent members was apparent in the missions championed by the US, Britain, and France in their former possessions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire.

In southern Africa, missions in Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique were heavily influenced by Cold War dynamics. The US delayed implementation of a Namibian peace plan by a decade in order to try to curb Cuban and Soviet expansionism. Only after rapprochement between Washington and Moscow did Uncle Sam pressure South Africa to withdraw from its neighbour.

The end of the Cold War made possible the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Angola and Mozambique. But the sustained interest and support of powerful Security Council members, vital to success in these countries, was mostly lacking in the first Angola mission and later in Rwanda.

The ill-fated 1993–94 Rwanda mission largely comprised poorly equipped armies

from developing countries, hampered by a weak mandate and little backing, political or financial, from the five permanent Security Council states. This encouraged the country's *génocidaires* to seek to end the mission by killing peacekeepers. The US and UK forced its withdrawal, resulting in 800,000 utterly preventable deaths. France, meanwhile, was a compromised intervener, having trained and provided military support to the genocidal regime.

### *The combination of Security Council and regional support is often necessary*

More recently, the Council has failed adequately to equip the UN mission in the DRC, which dispatched just 20,000 peacekeepers to a state the size of western Europe. In this instance, France played a positive role in leading two EU stabilisation forces to the Congo in 2003 and 2006. However, during the conflict, the country's riches were exploited by a myriad of warring factions, as well as by Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda. Some stability was only restored when regional states intervened.

The role of regional players, especially in the absence of support from the Security Council's permanent members, has been an important determinant for missions. It was crucial to the success of the 2004–06 UN mission in Burundi, where the groundwork was laid by prior South African-led African Union (AU) peacekeeping. But a combination of Security Council and regional support is often necessary. In Sudan, the US was instrumental in pressing Khartoum to sign a peace accord in 2005, while China convinced the regime to accept a hybrid AU/UN operation in Darfur in 2007. Strong Security Council support will also be vital for the success of the UN mission in South Sudan, which faces huge challenges as fighting continues in the world's newest state.

The experiences of UN peacekeeping in Africa have had a profound influence, not only on the continent, but also on

peacekeeping itself, beginning with the first ever armed mission, in Egypt, and the first case of peace enforcement, during the 1960s Congo crisis. The multidimensional peacekeeping operations of the post-Cold War era, designed to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace, were ushered in by the Namibia mission, while further innovations have seen co-operation between the UN and regional bodies in west, central, and eastern Africa.

Moreover, the two African Secretaries-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, as well as Algerian trouble-shooter Lakhdar Brahimi, have been instrumental in shaping much of the UN's post-Cold War peacekeeping architecture. And of the top 10 troop-contributing countries, five are African: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Rwanda and Ghana. Africa's immense contribution to peacekeeping should not be underestimated. ●

*Dr Adekeye Adebajo is Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa, and author of UN Peacekeeping in Africa: From the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts. He served on UN missions in South Africa, Western Sahara, and Iraq*



**UN peacekeepers in South Sudan on World AIDS Day, which the country's president has declared a public holiday** © UN Photo/Isaac Billy

## Feature

# Which global event changed your world?



*Rich Nelmes is UNA-UK's Membership & Business Development Manager*

**I**n October 2011, we invited UNA-UK members to tell us about a global event that had shaped their life and how they reacted to it. From relatively fresh memories of reading about the 9/11 attacks online to equally vivid recollections of Neville Chamberlain announcing the start of the Second World War on the wireless, the events our members chose are a testament to the diversity of our membership base – an invaluable asset that offers us a multitude of perspectives upon which to draw.

This wealth of experience not only provides a fascinating insight into the range of people that make up our organisation, but also sets a wider context for our work and enables us to speak collectively with the authority that only personal experience can bring. With our membership encompassing so many different backgrounds, this exercise has also helped to illustrate what unites us as a group.

With few exceptions, the reaction to every life-changing event was an investment – emotional, intellectual or financial – in the United Nations. Not surprising, you may think. After all, what would one expect from members of an association devoted to supporting the work and values of the UN?

But of course it's rare for anyone to start life with this outlook and at the heart of these stories is the active choice to turn to the UN. Whether the event was as catastrophic as the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s or as exhilarating as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the response was universal: the UN is the only organisation that can address the world's most pressing problems, which no state can tackle alone.

From the Millennium Development Goals to nuclear non-proliferation, together we bring the UN's goals to people in the UK and beyond, in the hope of galvanising a sometimes apathetic public to work for its ideals. We engage with the perceived limitations of a 66-year-old organisation by championing UN reform and identifying issues, like cyber-terrorism and climate change, that could never have been foreseen by its founders.

Above all, we are people who recognise the impact and value that the UN has on our lives and want to make sure the organisation continues its work well into the future.

**A man reads a copy of the Evening Standard at a London newsstand during the Falklands War in 1982** © Central Press/Hulton Archive/Getty Images



Ships were sailing from Portsmouth to the Falklands War on the day I attended my interview there for the Royal Navy. It was the realisation that I'd have to be part of wars like that which turned me into a peace campaigner.

Kathy Doughty,  
Peacehaven, East Sussex

***"It was the realisation that I'd have to be part of wars like that which turned me into a peace campaigner"***



I was working in an office near Uhuru Park, a tranquil and beautiful part of Nairobi just one kilometre from the US Embassy, when it was bombed in 1998. I'd never heard a noise like that before and the impact was such that my cup of tea spilled over.

Kaltum Guyo, Dartford, Kent

**Rescuers work to help survivors after the bomb explosion near the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 1998** © AFP/Getty Images



*“I could not understand how any ‘grown-up’ could let that happen”*

**Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, 1945**  
© MARKA/Alamy

*“I blamed my dad for Belsen”*

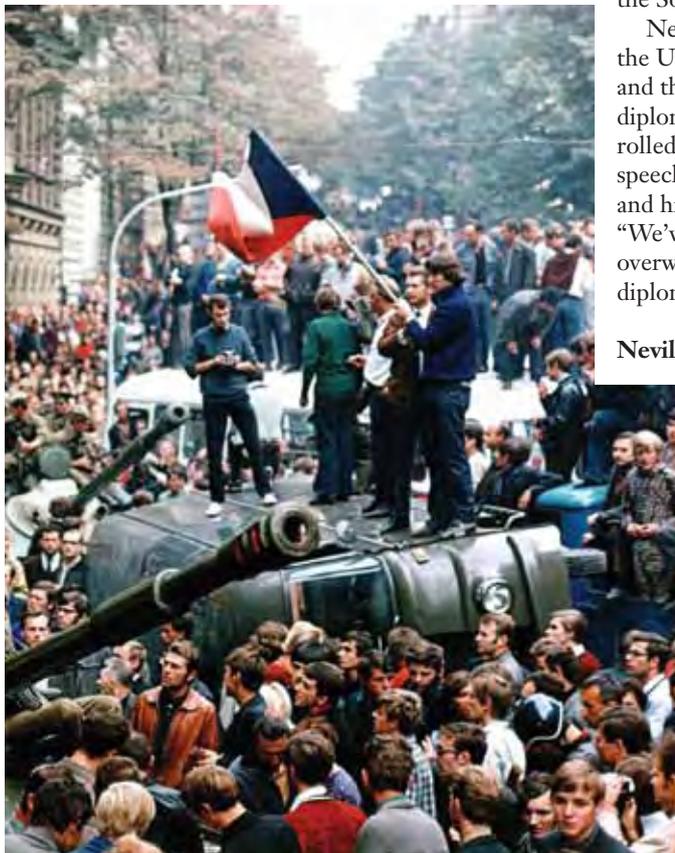
The world event that had the most impact for me was the revelation of what became known as the Holocaust in 1945.

I was a child visiting a local cinema with my mother in the UK and the Allied forces’ arrival at Belsen was shown in the news film.

On arriving home I remember blaming my dad. I blamed him because then I could not understand how any ‘grown-up’ could let that happen. Later, as I got older, I resolved to encourage all young people to watch closely how they are governed.

**Jennifer Allen, Birmingham**

**Czechoslovakians wave their national flag from the top of an overturned truck as others surround Soviet tanks in Prague on 21 August 1968, following the invasion by Warsaw Pact troops that ended the Prague Spring** © Libor Hajsky/AFP/Getty Images



*“We were aghast as we read the ticker-tape news of the Soviet invasion”*

On 21 August 1968, my wife and I were teaching English in Tanzania. We stood around the old news ticker-tape machine they had at the Kilimanjaro Hotel, Dar es Salaam. We were aghast as we read of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Nearby was a South African film editor from the UN in New York, with her American husband, and three men who turned out to be senior Czech diplomats. Anger was mixed with disbelief as the tanks rolled down the streets of Prague. The diplomats were speechless at the removal of Dubcek, the liberaliser, and his replacement by Husak, a Stalinist yes-man. “We’ve never heard of him,” they said. We felt an overwhelming sense of sympathy with the Czech diplomats, as they were so visibly upset.

**Neville Grant, Blackheath, London**

Along with many others, my time in the Royal Army Medical Corps led me to be aboard a Royal Navy ship on the way to reclaim Malaya from the Japanese when I heard about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. My immediate relief at not having to go into battle was totally eclipsed by anger and sadness at this event.

**Dr A Poteliakhoff, London**



The British Ambassador to Ethiopia invited me to visit the disaster area of the Ethiopian drought which caused the deaths of 120,000 people in 1971 and 1972. My great sadness and concern was only deepened when I discovered that the majority of people who died in the disaster had sold all their possessions for food.

Peter Stern, Chichester, West Sussex

**Pedestrians run from the scene as one of the World Trade Center Towers collapses**  
© AFP/Getty Images

*"I was preparing for my New York internship, then 9/11 happened"*

I spent the summer of 2001 looking forward to an internship with a New York NGO that monitors UN policymaking. The 11 September terrorist attacks happened days before I was about to leave.

I shared my emotions of anger and sadness with very mixed feelings about my own immediate future. My family and friends would probably have preferred that I changed my plans and I too had moments of panic. However, after careful thought, I decided that this opportunity could not be missed.

I passionately believed (and still do) in the important role the UN plays at times of great international upheaval and I witnessed this at first hand. My time at this NGO led to an internship at the UK Mission to the UN. This gave me a fascinating insight into the workings of the Security Council in the post 9/11, pre-Iraq war period. I'm so glad I didn't choose the 'safe' option and stay at home.

Karen Williams, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

*"I passionately believed (and still do) in the important role the UN plays at times of great international upheaval"*

*"Driving home I thought of my young family ... How would I protect them?"*

I was driving home when I heard the news on the radio of the Rwandan Genocide. I instantly thought of my own family – my three children were all under the age of five at the time. My thoughts raced: "What if that was me and my family? What would I be doing now to protect them? To save them?" I experienced a mix of different emotions: anger, depression, horror and disappointment.

Events like these make you realise the true meaning of family and community, and want to look after your own family and those around you. They make you care about the people you come into contact with. So I guess this horrific event made me care about others.

Nigel Moran, Waterlooville, Hampshire



While preparing to go on an estate walk at Sewingshields Wall, Northumberland, I heard of the Chernobyl disaster. I couldn't avoid the walk and I was extremely uneasy when it started to rain.

John Clark, Hexham, Northumberland

**A man checks for radioactivity in Strasbourg, France, following the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster** © Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images



# Do something

*You can make sure we inspire globally minded citizens for generations to come by choosing to leave us a gift in your will*

We asked our members what events might define the lives of their grandchildren, or the grandchildren of their friends.

Some told us they had already happened, pointing to events like the fall of Lehman Brothers or the Fukushima disaster.

Others predicted the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals or the dire effects of climate change. Many, mindful that no one accurately predicted the events of their own lifetime, said they could not begin to consider this question.

Rooted in all these thoughts was the deep conviction that future generations will need

and value the United Nations just as much as we have in our lifetimes. Matching a future investment in the UN with the efforts we have made in the past will be the key to ensuring that the UN not only survives but flourishes in the 21st century, the outcomes of which no one can really predict.

If you would like more information or wish to let us know that you have left us a gift in your will, please contact Rich Nelmes on 020 7766 3456, [membership@una.org.uk](mailto:membership@una.org.uk), or by post to UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court, London, SW1A 2EL. All of your communications will be treated with the utmost discretion.

**Peace doves are released in the grounds of the Hazrat-i-Ali mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, as part of a campaign launched by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in observance of the International Day of Peace © UN Photo**

**Elizabeth MacKeith on  
the banks of the Ganges  
at Dinapoor in 1988**

© Andrew MacKeith



### Paying tribute to Elizabeth MacKeith

I am writing to inform your readers that Elizabeth MacKeith, a long-standing member of UNA-UK, died on 23 January 2012 at the age of 102. UNA-UK recently invited members to recount the events that changed their lives and inspired them to support the UN. But often, it is people, not events, who shape our lives and for me, like for so many others within UNA-UK, Elizabeth was one of those people, along with Gordon Evans OBE, the founding Chairman of the UNA Westminster branch, and Dr Gillian Mackilligin.

Elizabeth was the strongest, and politest, feminist I have ever met, as well as a true Christian internationalist whose belief in the UN and all it stands for was absolutely rock solid. Having lived through two world wars, she had more reason than most to hope for a more peaceful and just world. I once invited her to watch a fireworks display with me on the Thames. “No, Bill,” she said. “I saw all the fireworks I ever want to see during the last war.” I was suitably chastened.

She was a real inspiration – a great UNA Westminster organiser and honorary secretary, and an amazing fundraiser for both UNA-UK and UNICEF-UK, raising thousands of pounds every year for almost half a century. She led by example and was also incredibly modest and fun to be with – an eternal optimist and a real doer. Her active support was recognised by two UNA-UK life memberships and a special award from UNICEF-UK, which was presented to her in Parliament by Baroness Ewart-Biggs.

Of the many memories I have of her, two stand out. The first is of us sitting together in the main restaurant of the UN in New York during a study tour. How proud and happy we were to be in a place that meant so much to us. The second is the last time I saw her, at a party I organised at the Goring Hotel in London for her centennial – an apt location as she used to fundraise outside it. She was very frail but full of life and still wearing her wonderful smile.

Gordon Evans believed strongly: “How infinitesimal is anything we can achieve, how infinitely important it is that we should do it.” To me, Elizabeth’s life encapsulated those words. She will be greatly missed.

William Say  
London

### Don't forget the DRC

I am writing to draw your attention to the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo following last November’s elections – an issue that has received poor coverage in the UK. Voters were bribed or intimidated, protestors beaten or teargassed, and people imprisoned or killed on a daily basis. Those of us outside the country were unable to contact relatives as phone services were disrupted.

While I realise that many Western nations have vested interests in the DRC – not least in its abundant natural wealth – I hope that these countries and the UN will nonetheless accord the Congolese people the same level of concern as those in North Africa and the Middle East who are also seeking freedom.

M.S.  
London

### Anti-war invitation

Congratulations on making it clear in your last issue (*New World*, Winter 2011, page 5) that the UN is still very relevant indeed. A better comparison with the UN’s \$30bn pricetag would have been the staggering \$1,630bn spent last year on militaries and wars. If we could redirect this sum to the real needs of humanity, most global problems, from hunger to climate change, could be solved.

The UN aims “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. In this task, we have a long way to go, although there are signs of hope (wars between major European powers, for example, now seem impossible as a result of economic and political changes). However, in recent years, the Security Council seems to have been used to legitimise war, not prevent it, although it is only empowered to approve military action when all other ways of ending a conflict have been exhausted.

UNA-UK members who would like to co-operate with us in making war the relic of a barbaric past are more than welcome to get in touch: write to 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ.

Bruce Kent  
Vice President, Movement for the  
Abolition of War

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

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

# IMPORTANT NOTICES FOR UNA-UK MEMBERS

## Note from the Chairman on the General Meeting held on 24 November 2011

I am writing to update you on the outcomes of UNA-UK's General Meeting held on 24 November 2011. I am delighted to inform you that at the meeting, members voted overwhelmingly for the adoption of our new four-year strategic plan, "Striving for Change", which was developed in consultation with the membership over the past 12 months.

The General Meeting also voted by a large majority – over 75% – for UNA-UK to merge into a new charitable organisation, along with The UNA Trust, subject to Charity Commission approval. The new organisation will continue to use the name UNA-UK.

There was a healthy debate on the proposals at the General Meeting, which I welcome. It is good to see the passion there is within our organisation. The Board and I understand from the meeting that a number of questions remain about the direction the organisation is taking. I hope that some of these questions will be addressed in the document "UNA-UK General Meeting on 24 November 2011 – Update to Members", which is available from [www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting](http://www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting).

I also hope that the convincing majority achieved for the proposals, both at the meeting and in the feedback we received from the membership prior to that, will be seen as evidence of the strong support we have from the wider membership to move forward in this way. It will now be up to the Board and Executive to implement the decision of members in the most effective way possible.

### **Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK Chairman**

The update to members mentioned above and the documents listed below are available from [www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting](http://www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting). Hard copies can be requested by contacting Hayley Richardson on 020 7766 3454 or [richardson@una.org.uk](mailto:richardson@una.org.uk).

- Strategic Plan 2011-2015
- Draft minutes of the General Meeting
- FAQs on the strategic plan
- Draft Article and Rules

## 2012 Annual General Meeting

### **AGM information**

The AGM will take place at 2pm on **21 April 2012** at the Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL. All paid-up and honorary UNA-UK members have been sent the AGM notice with this issue of *New World*. All such 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 Carol Hodson, Company Secretary, on 020 7766 3455 or [hodson@una.org.uk](mailto:hodson@una.org.uk).

### **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 with this issue of *New World*. The deadline for submissions is **9 March 2012**.

### **2012 Distinguished Service Awards**

Nominations for UNA-UK Distinguished Service Awards are now open – the deadline is **30 March 2012**. Further information has been sent to all paid-up and honorary members with this issue of *New World*.

## Election of Directors to the new company

The new United Nations Association-UK company (see box on left) is applying for charitable status. If successful, four Directors, each from a specific area of England, will need to be elected to the new company's Board, which has decided to proceed with elections while the application is in process.

The deadline for nominations is **5 March 2012**. Further information has been sent to all paid-up and honorary members with this issue of *New World*.

*Detailed information on all of 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 Carol Hodson, Company Secretary, on 020 7766 3455 or [hodson@una.org.uk](mailto:hodson@una.org.uk).*



*The Farmers Club, London*

A close-up portrait of Mark Malloch-Brown, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

**Essay**

# The UN and Europe: coming full circle

***Mark Malloch-Brown suggests that the crisis facing the EU highlights the need for more inclusive global economic governance that can catalyse a renewed commitment to the UN***

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In a year that witnessed the dramatic events of the Arab Spring, protests on Wall Street and the death of Osama bin Laden, the political limelight hovered conspicuously over the European continent, where leaders battled to save the euro – the one-time dream of many a politician following the Second World War.

The evolving eurozone crisis continues to challenge the imagination of European leaders to manage interconnected events that have global economic and political ramifications. “Governance as usual” is struggling against difficult odds to meet this new kind of globalised challenge. An understanding of the true nature of the crisis in Europe highlights the need for a legitimate and inclusive model of international co-operation, which is the United Nations at its best.

The ailing peripheral states of Europe, with Greece the worst affected, have dominated the concerns of investors, as their economies lurched into an escalating sovereign debt crisis and half-baked bailouts failed to stem the collapse. Yet, while the crisis has been fanned by weak European political leadership, its root is a structural global economic dislocation stemming from the build-up in the Western world of unsustainable sovereign and household debt over decades, to enormous proportions. This build-up occurred because politicians and consumers alike failed to confront their relative loss of wealth in the world. Borrowing filled the hole and enabled Europe to live beyond its means, buying more than it could afford from China and elsewhere. Of course, faltering economic growth – the very cause of increased borrowing – has made the bill for servicing this massive debt unaffordable for householders and, in the case of Greece, entire countries. And as the European economy is intrinsically interlinked, a debt problem for Greece is a problem for all of us.

The push towards austerity, coupled with the serial political incompetence of European leaders in addressing the crisis, has led to public protests in several countries and smouldering tensions between EU member states that threaten not only the survival of the euro, but also the entire institutional architecture of the European project, not to mention the wider model of liberal European social democracy that, along with the UN, has been part of the post-1945 international order.

The prognosis is bleak. The old economic system is under strain. Trust in politicians and institutions is declining, and a revival of nationalist and populist sentiment is threatening Europe’s values. In short, the eurozone crisis reflects massive shifts in relative wealth between nations and within nations that are shaking national governments and European institutions to their core.

The EU belongs to a younger and, on the face of it at least, more vigorous generation of global institutions than the UN. Formed for the most part some five decades after the UN, by a group of countries with a shared history and values, it represents a much more ambitious design. It does not merely have a ‘general assembly’ comprising its nation state members, but rather a council of ministers and directly elected parliament, a significantly larger budget (more than 50 times the value of the UN’s core funds) and greater ambitions for supranationalism (what is the UN Charter if not a guarantor of national sovereignty?). So if the EU risks being mortally damaged by the crisis, what chance does the weaker, looser and more modest UN have of staying afloat?

Oddly, the latter’s chances are much better. This is, in part, for a negative reason: namely, the peripheral role the organisation has played during this economic crisis. In 2008, the G20, the world’s major economies, turned to the UN’s cousins, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to help stave off a global recession.

While the UN has had to cope with the fall-out – since 2008, the UN Development Programme has consistently reported on the negative impact of the global downturn on aid and on initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals – it has, in many ways, remained a bystander where efforts to solve the crisis are concerned. Smaller nations have chosen to use it as a venue to complain about their marginalisation and exclusion from G20 decision-making, but the UN has not served as a platform or focal point for economic summits or discussions.

More positively though, while the EU appears now to represent the losers in the extraordinary global economic realignment that is under way, the UN, because of its universal character, encompasses the winners as well. It is for this reason that the organisation is likely to survive and, given the right ingredients, even thrive.

The UN offers what the G20 and Bretton Woods institutions cannot provide: a legitimate and inclusive platform for writing the new rules of a changing global economy. The leadership may come from the G20 or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the ideas from a Beijing or Washington think tank, but the codification, legitimacy and universal buy-in can only come from the UN.

This is why we may yet see a period of renewal at the UN, even as the dark clouds continue to gather over Europe and the global economy. Emerging powers and small countries alike need a rules-based world of orderly markets and trade because they tend, in many cases, to depend on international trade for their prosperity. They need the global system to work in ways that mattered less when their economies were closed and Europe stood astride the international trade. And for globalisation itself to enjoy sustained political support, we need UN institutions that are capable of leading the charge against poverty and towards basic education and health for all. These are indispensable components of the kind of social contract that is needed to underpin a more collaborative system of global governance.

The UN was brought into existence by a world war that began in Europe. Now, a much lesser but nevertheless tragic European crisis may perversely contribute to a renewed commitment to the UN. ●

*Lord Malloch-Brown is Chairman of Europe, Middle East and Africa at FTI Consulting. He was a Minister of State in the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office with responsibility for Africa, Asia and the UN from 2007 to 2009. He previously served as UN Deputy Secretary-General, head of the UN Development Programme and Vice President of External Affairs at the World Bank*

**We need UN institutions that are capable of leading the charge against poverty and towards basic education and health for all**

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## The UN & the UK

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

### Remembering the spirit of '42

The 70th anniversary of the "Declaration by United Nations" – the first use of the name to denote the coalition fighting the Axis powers – fell on 1 January 2012.

UNA-UK helped to mark this milestone by participating in a seminar organised by our advisor Dr Dan Plesch of the School of Oriental and African Studies, at Lancaster House on 18 January. The event explored the UN's wartime origins and featured material from Dr Plesch's book, *America, Hitler and the UN*, as well as contributions from speakers including former UN Under-Secretary-General Dame Margaret Anstee and former Deputy Director of the UN Children's Fund Sir Richard Jolly.

Challenging the notion that the UN was created in a moment of postwar idealism, the speakers described how the organisation was conceived at a time when the outcome of the conflict was far from certain. The agreement forged between the 26 countries was seen as vital to victory – precluding them from entering into deals with Nazi Germany and engendering public support by framing their efforts as a defence of freedom.

The institutions created in 1945 were the culmination of these efforts – an attempt to create a broader, permanent basis for cooperation. Commending the anniversary event, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the world was living through another "pivotal moment" and expressed hope that, instead of entrenching self-interest, governments and peoples would carry forward the ideals of the UN.

These themes were central to UNA-UK's commemoration of UN Day 2011 at Australia House, which brought together the diplomatic, political, corporate and



**Dame Margaret Anstee accepts the inaugural Sir Brian Urquhart Award for Distinguished Service to the UN**  
© UNA-UK/Mark Makela

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NGO communities to celebrate the work of the UN. At the event, Dame Margaret Anstee was recognised for her four decades of service with the UN, during which she directed programmes in every developing region of the world and became the first woman to lead a UN peacekeeping mission. She received the inaugural UNA-UK Award for Distinguished Service to the UN, named in honour of Sir Brian Urquhart, himself a pivotal figure in the development of the UN's administrative framework and peacekeeping functions.

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### Visit to UNA-UK by R2P Adviser

The UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P), Dr Edward Luck, visited UNA-

UK in December 2011. After speaking at a joint event with the Oxford University Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict, Dr Luck was interviewed at the UNA-UK offices and addressed a meeting of the UN All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG). He described last year's events in Libya as a watershed moment for the implementation of R2P. A recording of his interview is available at [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk)

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### Nuke-free Middle East a step closer?

As Iran's nuclear programme provokes fresh sanctions, a UN conference on the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East looks set to be held in December 2012. The plan emerged following a breakthrough at the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. A timetable has now been laid down for the Middle East conference and Finnish Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Security Policy Jaakko Laajava has been appointed as facilitator.

On 29 November, UNA-UK held a high-level roundtable to generate recommendations on the Middle East zone as part of its “Towards Zero” nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament initiative. Participants including former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Hans Blix, and experts from the UN, Arab League, China, Russia, the US and the UK, formulated proposals that were later forwarded to Mr Laajava.

### **Rio+20 (+ another 16 days)**

The UN’s Rio+20 summit has been moved from 4–6 June to 20–22 June 2012 because a clash with Queen Elizabeth II’s diamond jubilee celebrations threatened to reduce participation by Commonwealth leaders.

The summit will focus on developing a green economy and creating a global institutional framework for sustainable development. Minister for Government Policy Oliver Letwin focussed on the former in a piece for the UN Environment Programme website, calling for growth that meets the “triple demands” of rallying the global economy, helping the poorest, and preserving the natural capital on which growth ultimately depends.

UNA-UK will be contributing to the summit through its delegation to the triennial assembly of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), and has to date focussed its attention on institutional questions, undertaking joint media advocacy with WFUNA on the need for a global environmental organisation. See [www.una.org.uk](http://www.una.org.uk) for more details.

### **Torture inquiry abandoned**

A government-commissioned inquiry into the possible abuse of terrorism suspects has been abandoned after the police announced in January that they will investigate claims of British involvement in the alleged torture and rendition of two Libyans, one of whom, Abdel-Hakim Belhaj, later became a leading member of the country’s anti-Gaddafi movement.

The inquiry had already been delayed and was characterised as too weak by human rights organisations. The allegations are likely to be raised during the UK’s four-year review at the UN Human Rights Council later this year.

### **Somalia conference in London**

On 23 February, representatives of the UN, African Union and over 40 governments will gather in London to discuss challenges facing Somalia, including terrorism and piracy. Representatives of the country’s Transitional Federal Institutions and disputed territories will also be present.



### **UNA-UK Executive Director Phil Mulligan on cutting carbon rhetoric as well as emissions**

One of the most important events of 2012 will be the Rio+20 Earth Summit in June, the outcomes of which will be discussed at UNA-UK’s UN Forum event on 14 July (see back page). Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, who has been invited to speak at the Forum, is right to point out that we need bottom-up as well as top-down approaches if we are to combat climate change (see page 8). But the lead has to come from countries like the UK that have enjoyed long periods of economic prosperity, often at the expense of environmental sustainability. Rich nations need to accept what appear to be sacrifices in terms of emission cuts and funding arrangements but which are in fact vital to avoiding ruination for us all.

The UK government should be commended for its recent decision to provide £10m to the UN Adaptation Fund, which offers assistance to the world’s poorest countries. They have contributed least to climate change but are already bearing the brunt of its impacts. However, £10m is a drop in a dangerously warming ocean when set against the estimated £28bn per year that the UK needs to spend to keep temperature rises to acceptable levels, according to the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change (or indeed the 5–20% loss in global GDP it projected if climate change remains unchecked).

When governments cannot be relied on to take bold action, activism is more important than ever and much is happening at the local level (see the excellent work by UNA Canterbury on page 24). But difficult personal choices also have to be made. Research indicates that emissions rise throughout a person’s life before peaking after 60. As we get older, therefore, we have to get wiser about minimising our carbon emissions. Put that alongside the campaigning which UNA-UK and its members promote and you have a combination we can be particularly proud of.

Last year, nearly 300,000 people fled Somalia due to violence and famine. Over half of these are now in the area around Dadaab, Kenya, described as the largest refugee camp in the world. In Somalia itself, militant group al-Shabab has expelled the Red Cross from areas under its control.

### **Cluster munitions threat avoided**

UNA-UK welcomed the rejection of a less stringent alternative to the Cluster Munitions Convention at the UN in Geneva last November. Backed by the US, Russia, China and India, the proposed agreement could have discouraged states from joining the emerging international ban on cluster munitions. Ahead of the Geneva meeting, UNA-UK Chairman Sir Jeremy Greenstock wrote to the government urging it to reject any attempt to water down the Convention, while members of UNA-UK and the UN APPG signed petitions on the issue.

### **Peers show support for UN agencies**

On 22 November, the House of Lords held a debate on how to enhance the UK’s role in the UN’s specialised agencies. UNA-UK provided a preparatory briefing to the UN APPG, focussing on agencies where

strong UK support would be particularly beneficial. APPG member Lord Judd urged the UK government to press the US over its stance on funding to UNESCO and the UN Population Fund, to examine further ways in which the UK can support UN Women, and to use DFID’s Multilateral Aid Review to stimulate a wider discussion with other donor countries.

### **Minister praises UN**

At a UN APPG meeting on 18 January Henry Bellingham, Parliamentary Under Secretary with responsibility for the UN, praised the UN’s work in 2011, from South Sudan’s independence to peacekeeping in Côte d’Ivoire, and outlined some of the challenges ahead, including Somalia, which he described as being “at the top” of the UK’s agenda.

### **UK backs emergency fund**

The UK has announced that it will give £20m to the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund, after warning that the UN’s disaster relief capacity was dangerously underfunded, leaving the global community “unprepared for future shocks”. ●

## UNA-UK Members



### UNA Canterbury takes action on the environment close to home while it looks forward to the Rio+20 summit

In preparation for the Rio+20 summit in June 2012, UNA Canterbury branch has been developing a set of environmental principles based on the summit's themes – securing political commitment on, and creating a more effective institutional framework for, sustainable development. It began by considering the emerging concept of 'ecocide'.

Crudely defined as 'murder of the environment', ecocide has raised the hackles of those who believe that it is difficult to identify the perpetrators of such crimes. How, for example, could legal liability be apportioned for the damage that human activity has caused to the earth's ecosystems since the industrial revolution? The complexity of the issue is illustrated by the ongoing debates at UN climate conferences on the responsibility for historic carbon emissions and the reluctance of some developing countries to accept binding curbs

#### **Reinforcing Rio: UNA Canterbury's new priorities:**

- Strengthening the UN Environment Programme and expanding its remit and powers
- Introducing the means for enforcing global agreements and enhancing arbitration, e.g. an International Court for the Environment
- Devising preventative standards of conduct based on the following principles:
  - Conservation and restoration of damaged or destroyed ecosystems
  - Preservation of biodiversity to halt or reverse accelerating extinction rates
  - Husbandry of all marine and land food sources to avoid overfishing, soil and water erosion and pollution, and natural habitat loss
  - Replacing economic growth as the indicator of a nation's progress with sustainable development
  - Using the term 'planet earth' or 'mother earth' in strategies designed to confer rights on the environment, to denote an entity worthy of rights and not merely a commercial asset

on emissions, which they believe conflict with their right to development.

But if one distinguishes between general environmental damage and specific instances of destruction – for example, deforestation or industrial disasters such as the 1984 Union Carbide disaster in Bhopal, India, or the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, one can see how legal liability could be determined.

A useful precedent is contained in the Rome Statute, the treaty that governs the International Criminal Court (ICC), which includes the following in its definition of war crimes: "Intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack will cause ... widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment which would be clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated." (Article 8.2.b.iv)

The branch took inspiration from a presentation given by environmental lawyer and activist Polly Higgins to a UNA London and South-East Region meeting in 2010 in which she spoke about the proposal she had sent to the UN's International Law Commission for ecocide to be made a crime arbitrated by the ICC.

We organised a major conference in April last year to explore further how environmental protection can be reconciled with human development. The conference outcomes, reproduced in the box (left), formed the basis of the branch's resolutions to UNA-UK's 2011 policy conference.

UNA Canterbury's recent activities build on its long tradition of work on environmental issues. Since the 1980s, the branch has undertaken parliamentary lobbying and awareness-raising, including, for many years, annual exhibitions on environmental issues.

Following the first UN Earth Summit in 1992, branch members actively promoted Agenda 21, the action plan arising from the event, which encompassed local, national and global initiatives. More recently we have decided to campaign for ecocide to be redefined as a crime under a new International Court for the Environment,



**Various groups in Canterbury are working together on 'Transition Town' projects – a set of local strategies followed around the world to promote sustainability, self-sufficiency and community development**

© Transition City Canterbury

which has been proposed by lawyers and activists as a legal home for the adjudication of environmental law, including UN treaties.

At the local level, the branch has formed partnerships with two groups, the Kent Environment and Community Network, which helps communities to challenge inappropriate development applications, and the Abbots Mill Project, which aims to build a renewable energy centre on the River Stour in Canterbury.

The branch is also organising a joint Earth Day conference and exhibition in April 2012 entitled "Think Global, Act Local: revisited" to reflect our conviction that we must recapture the Earth Summit mentality of 20 years ago. Perhaps most important, as we lobby against ecological degradation and for strengthening environmental law, we will strive to make our own lifestyles more sustainable. ●

**Dr Geoff Meaden is Chair of the UNA Canterbury Branch**

# UNA-UK Young Professionals



*We spoke to UNA-UK young professional **Erin Weir** about her work for Refugees International*

## **Tell us about your work.**

Refugees International is an independent organisation with advocates like me who go to countries affected by armed conflict to identify protection gaps. All our recommendations are based on field research, so I spend three months a year interviewing displaced persons, aid workers, peacekeepers and government representatives. The rest of my time is spent in New York and Washington, where I meet UN officials, member states, US policymakers and the media to advocate for policy changes, funding and new tools to improve civilian safety and humanitarian aid in war zones.

## **What attracted you to this job?**

Many people think civilians are harmed by accident in armed conflict, when in fact they are used as a tool of war. When civilians are the battleground, protecting them becomes much more complicated. I am drawn to the ethical imperative and intellectual challenge this poses: how can you best keep people safe when harming them is a matter of strategy?

## **You have worked in countries like South Sudan and the DRC. What experience has most shaped you?**

Realising that the international community only reaches a fraction of those in need. The bulk of support, be it food, shelter or protection, comes from local host communities, which often face serious threats of their own. That extremely poor people are willing to do so much motivates me to press rich countries to do more.

## **How do the civilians you meet respond to peacekeepers?**

Sometimes people are vehemently, even violently, opposed to peacekeepers but others end up with nothing but praise for them. There are many variables but, fundamentally, people want security and are receptive when they believe action is being taken to protect their communities. UN, African Union and EU peacekeepers are perceived differently on a political level but the basic rule remains – effective protection fosters legitimacy.

## **And how do people react to you?**

I am an outsider, so there is always some level of caution, but most people seem to appreciate the opportunity to tell their stories. I try to honour their trust by translating their experiences into useful recommendations.

## **Is it possible, despite differences in context, to identify one key measure that would greatly enhance civilian protection?**

Absolutely: consistent engagement with vulnerable communities. Good peacekeepers understand local dynamics and identify threats by talking to communities. The greater the trust they build with the people they are there to protect, the more effective they are. The UN mission in the DRC took important steps in this direction, pioneering the use of Community Liaison Assistants and testing ways for local people to contact the mission directly. These lessons are beginning to be applied in Sudan but the UN will need to continue to refine and adapt these tactics to new environments.

## **What would you say to those who argue that peacekeeping is nothing but a salve for the world's conscience?**

UN peacekeeping is often the best tool for the job, even if it isn't perfect. Not only does the UN have more (hard-won) experience in civilian protection than most other institutions, its checks and balances, though cumbersome, mitigate state self-interest to some extent, meaning that UN missions have more political credibility.

## **The US is the biggest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping, but supplies just 132 troops, experts and police. Is that the right approach?**

It's unlikely that we will ever see large numbers of US troops in peacekeeping missions and, politically speaking, this is probably for the best. But the US could contribute advanced technical capabilities that many other militaries lack. I'm hopeful that the withdrawal from Iraq and the drawdown in Afghanistan will create an

opportunity for the US and NATO allies like the UK to contribute more 'enabling units' – engineers, intelligence and medical units – to help missions operate more effectively.

## **Two situations in 2011 have been cited as examples of the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P): the robust action by UN peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire and the intervention in Libya.**

These situations were clearly expressions of R2P but only one aspect of it: military action to halt violence already in motion. In effect, this means that opportunities to respond earlier – when deaths could have been avoided – were missed. Governments, multilateral bodies like the UN and IMF, and alliances like NATO must learn to identify risks early on so that they can take political and economic measures that will hopefully make military intervention unnecessary.

## **Has either situation set a precedent?**

Both cases involved a very particular constellation of factors, so I don't think either will become a blueprint. Military intervention will likely continue to be the exception. That said, there is an opportunity to learn from these interventions, about minimising unintended harm, for example, and determining the dividing line between protection and regime-change.

## **Lastly, what does the future hold for you?**

This year, I'll be returning to the DRC, South Sudan and Somalia and will participate, for the first time, in an assessment mission in Afghanistan. My programme will engage more actively with the US military on doctrine and with NGOs on training and co-ordination. I'm hoping this will complement the work of my humanitarian-focussed colleagues and allow RI to address more fully the spectrum of protection threats that people face every day. ●

***Erin Weir is Senior Advocate for Protection and Security at Refugees International. She has worked with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations on training materials for civilian protection***



## Quintin Chou-Lambert outlines why the newest UNA Youth branch - the SOAS UNA society - might become one of the liveliest

Welcome to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) - home to 5,400 students from over 130 countries and, now, to a new branch of UNA Youth. Founded in winter 2011, the SOAS UNA society aims to promote awareness and discussion on issues relating to the UN, through guest speakers, debates, special-interest films, UN-related career sessions and informal socials.

I founded the society along with Leticia Thomas and Rebecca Craig, two of my classmates on the MSc in Violence, Conflict and Development. We are delighted that SOAS faculty member Dr Dan Plesch - author of the groundbreaking book *America, Hitler and the UN*, and a member of UNA-UK's expert advisory panel - has agreed to act as an advisor during our inaugural year.

We decided to start the branch to provide a platform for engaging directly, and critically, with UN-related issues. Our first event was a debate on the motion: "The UN does more harm than good for global security and development."

The World Bank's "World Development Report" in 2011 highlighted the devastating impact of intra-state conflict on development and suggests that the prevention of violence is as important for development as initiatives like the UN Millennium Development Goals. But preventing conflict often entails sustained

engagement by a plethora of international, national and local stakeholders. We hope that our event fleshed out some of these challenges and provided a frank assessment of the UN's responses to them, especially in terms of legitimacy and credibility - both of which are crucial to the organisation's effectiveness.

Questions about the UN's performance are regularly voiced at SOAS, where perceptions range from interested to hostile. We spoke to more than 100 students while scouting for members and it is clear that motives for engaging with UN issues can vary greatly. "I'm interested in a career with the UN but don't want to work for an organisation that could be having a negative impact ... I'd like to find out more about the UN's effectiveness," says Lucile Kamar, a postgraduate student in human rights law.

James Burnett, another masters student, believes that attitudes towards the UN vary considerably at SOAS because of the school's international make-up and the different approaches within its academic disciplines. He believes that this makes SOAS a fertile hunting ground for our new society: "Many articles I'm reading in my Social Anthropology of Development course cast a critical eye over UN development interventions, so debating the UN's legitimacy and credibility is highly complementary to my studies."

Other opinions are less favourable. "Critiquing the UN - I'm up for that!" says one undergraduate politics student, citing the UN's interventions in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya as examples of potential challenges to the organisation's legitimacy.

We hope that by engaging with a range of students with different opinions, we will be able to focus attention on global problems and where the solutions to them may lie. Despite the evolving consensus around the Millennium Development Goals and the 'responsibility to protect', their implementation remains controversial in many parts of the world, and among a significant proportion of the 40% of SOAS students who come from outside the UK.

Many of them will go on to careers that involve interaction with the UN system, either at field or head-office level. By offering them the chance to gain new perspectives on what the UN does, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it might be improved, the SOAS UNA society hopes to increase students' understanding of how the organisation contributes to tackling global problems, and what role they might play in pursuing the same end. ●

**Quintin Chou-Lambert is President of the SOAS UNA Society and a member of UNA-UK's Young Professional Network**



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# Education and Reconciliation

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Explore the role education has played in fostering or hindering reconciliation with case studies from Bosnia Herzegovina, Rwanda, South Africa, Jordan, Peru and the United States. Chapter 7, on the Ingando Peace and Solidarity Camp, was written by James Kearney, UNA-UK's Peace and Security Programme Co-ordinator.

*"This book is a must read for those working in the area of international education development. Paulson brings together a superb group of varied authors to help us gain better insights into the realities of post-conflict reconciliation practices and the (un)intended effects of these in diverse contexts worldwide"*

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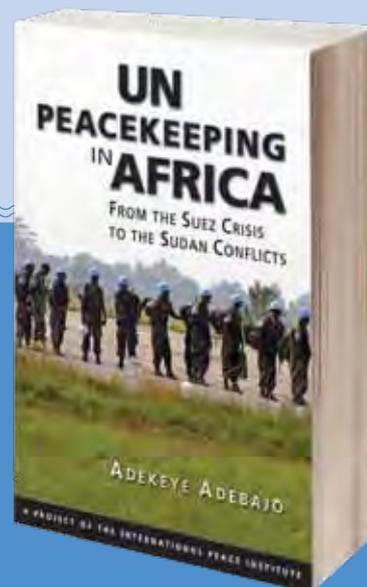
## UN Peacekeeping in Africa: from the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts

**Adekeye Adebajo**

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