

# Ten ideas for UK foreign policy

*UNA-UK believes that these 10 suggestions for action represent an investment in Britain's future and in a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. This is not a wish list requiring huge amounts of expenditure. These are targeted ideas for how, with the full support of its people, the UK can use its strengths – leadership, a global network, expertise and diplomacy – to deliver wide-ranging national and international benefits*

## 01 A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO PREVENT MASS ATROCITIES

*After the slaughter of 800,000 people in Rwanda in 1994, the international community vowed: never again. But 20 years on, civilians are still being massacred, from Iraq to South Sudan. Genocide, war crimes, mass rape – these crimes against humanity diminish us all. Inherently unacceptable, the fall-out from such atrocities can also threaten our security.*

The UK has been a champion of international action. It can build on this record by making atrocity prevention a national priority, and ensuring that its foreign, development and defence programmes are geared to support this.

## 03 A CLEAR PATHWAY TO ERADICATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

*The UK signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 in the belief that a world free from nuclear weapons was in the national and global interest. Although 189 states have taken on this legal duty to disarm, it remains unfulfilled, undermining not just our safety but also our system of global governance. It is time for the UK to set out a concrete plan on how it will contribute to multilateral nuclear disarmament. It can do this by reviewing its own nuclear programme and encouraging other nuclear powers to sign up to international treaties and initiatives.*

## 02 MORE INTENSIVE ENGAGEMENT TO STRENGTHEN UN PEACEKEEPING

*Across the world, UN peacekeeping has proved to be the most effective framework for stabilising post-conflict situations and preventing them from threatening regional and global security.*

Compared with missions led by individual countries, UN operations have fewer costs and a higher degree of success and legitimacy. While the UK continues to play an important role in the approval, design and funding of UN peacekeeping missions, its practical engagement has decreased over the past 20 years. The winding down of operations in Afghanistan offers an opportunity to reassess this trend.

## 04 ROBUST POLICIES TO CONTROL ARMS, DRONES AND KILLER ROBOTS

*The UK was instrumental in securing an international treaty to control the trade in conventional weapons, which kill half a million people a year. It can now set a powerful example by implementing the Arms Trade Treaty to a high standard – including through its arms export controls – and by sharing best practice. It can also use its positive record in arms control to define and build support for international regulation of drone use and for a moratorium on the development of lethal autonomous weapons (also known as killer robots).*

## 05 LEADERSHIP TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONALLY

*The UK can be proud of its historic role in shaping the international human rights system, which helps to protect millions around the world and to create more stable, prosperous societies. Unfortunately, too many people see their rights abused or unfulfilled – leading to misery, poverty and conflict. For the sake of these people and to increase global security, the UK must continue to provide leadership on human rights. This includes setting a positive example in its interactions with UN mechanisms, and strengthening the UN's capacity to address violations, for example, by improving the links between the Human Rights Council and Security Council.*

## 08 CONCERTED ACTION TO PROMOTE PROGRESSIVE NEW DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*The creation of a new development framework, with targets for rich and developing countries, is an opportunity to build on the UN Millennium Development Goals and support sustainable societies around the world. The UK can build on its commendable efforts to date by encouraging greater focus on the mechanisms needed for financing, data collection, partnership creation and public input into the new goals. It can lead by example by embracing the universality of the framework, setting out its own plans to achieve the proposed targets. The UK can also encourage early discussions on how the new goals can complement climate targets.*

## 06 A STRONG COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME

*International human rights laws, norms and standards provide crucial protections for people in the UK. Indeed, British citizens have played a key role in achieving these hard-won gains at the global level, and in making them a reality at home. By striving for an unimpeachable human rights record and by increasing public and parliamentary scrutiny of how well it implements its international obligations, the UK can serve its own people and set an example to countries, strengthening its ability to act as a credible global advocate for human rights.*

## 09 A VIGOROUS DRIVE TO SECURE THE CLIMATE DEAL WE NEED

*The current shape of the global climate agreement due in 2015 – with each state setting its own targets – is a long way off the robust treaty we need. The UK must persevere in raising the level of ambition. It can champion ways to make the treaty more rigorous, e.g. by linking green funds to performance; call for the EU to adopt a stronger 2030 emissions-reduction goal regardless of what other states do; and set an example by adopting more stringent targets during the period before the new treaty is due to come into force.*

## 07 A BOLD PLAN TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

*There is a real risk that the hard-won gains of the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing may be lost amid the broad, agenda-setting UN meetings planned for 2015. The UK can use its strong reputation in this area by championing a global development goal on gender, with targets for rich and developing countries; ensuring that its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security sets the highest possible standards; and using its statements at next year's Beijing review conference to set out a bold plan for the next 20 years of women's advancement.*

## 10 SUPPORT TO ENHANCE THE UN'S EFFECTIVENESS BY IMPROVING ITS LEADERSHIP SELECTION

*A skilled UN Secretary-General with a strong mandate could do much to improve the organisation's effectiveness. But the selection process for the role is clearly flawed: the Security Council endorses one candidate for the rest of the UN to rubberstamp – subject to veto by any of the Council's five permanent members (P5). As one of the P5, the UK could be a voice for reform, insisting the appointment of the next Secretary-General is based on selection criteria, reflects best practice in equality, has a clear timetable, and gives the General Assembly a meaningful role.*