

London & South East Region

Policy Forum, Saturday 25th November 2017

Resource Centre 356 Holloway Road

Resolutions agreed

1. UN REFORM

London & South East Region

1. **applauds** the efforts of the UN Secretary-General in leading reform initiatives as set out in his annual report on the UN's work. (see below for summary),[i](#)
2. **Regrets** the UK Prime Minister's comments at this year's General Assembly that Britain could withhold up to 30% of its £90m core funding each year unless the organisation and its agencies reform by 'showing they are efficient and transparent (so) they may win our trust';
3. **Challenges** the grounds and evidence for that assessment;
4. **Acknowledges** the need for further improvements to UN operations and performance but noting that this will not be achieved through grandstanding and uncritical adherence to US policy positions;
5. **Expects** the UK, which enjoys privileged status at the UN, to take a constructive lead in UN reform through example, and;
6. **To report** periodically to the UK public through the FCO website on progress made in these efforts.

Summary: Introduction of cabinet-style weekly Executive Committee meetings to enhance decision-making and promote cross-pillar perspectives; appointing a new USG-led Office of Counter-Terrorism; strengthen prevention through appointing a Special Adviser on Policy and a High-level Advisory Board for Mediation; strengthened whistle-blower protection policy; combatting sexual exploitation and abuse; introducing a new strategy for the UN system to strengthen its investigative capacities and engage the responsibility of senior leaders; commit to achieving gender parity at the senior leadership level by 2021; agree with AU to enhance coordination of UN-AU activities at all levels; a joint EU-UN initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls; introduce strategy on financing for development to facilitate investments in the SDGs, including a proposal to the G20 on an international finance facility for education; and set in motion a process of reform of the development system, peace and security architecture and management of the UN.

Passed with 1 against

2. UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

London & South East Region

1. **Welcomes** the UN Sustainable Development Goals programme (SDG);
2. **Applauds** the roles played by David Cameron and his co-chairs of the UN Secretary General-appointed High-level Panel which successfully led to its adoption by the UN General Assembly;
3. **Notes** that the SDGs require every State to set out its National Strategy to promote and implement the SDGs, raise public awareness and encourage engagement with the Global Goals;
4. **Is Concerned** that the UK government has yet to publish its Strategy;

5. **Shares** the concerns of the All Party Parliamentary group on the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development that it may be for the UK NGO community to set out the required strategy and ensure adequate resources for data collection are available;
6. **Urges** the government to fulfil its obligations in this respect and publish its National Strategy forthwith.

Unanimously passed

3. NUCLEAR WEAPONS

London & South East Region

1. **Applauds** the adoption of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (7th July 2017) by 122 member states which prohibits a full range of nuclear-weapon-related activities and gives nuclear weapons a similar legal status to biological and chemical weapons and prohibits the production, testing, use, threat of use, and assisting other groups in such actions;
2. **Congratulates** the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on being awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work towards this end;
3. **Regrets that** despite being committed, since 1968, to negotiating the elimination of all nuclear weapons 'in good faith' by Article V1 of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty the UK Government refused to participate in the multilateral negotiations leading to the treaty and Prime Minister Theresa May has been dismissive of any suggestion that this country should sign up to it;
4. **Welcomes** the joint statement by UNA-UK and the British American Security Information Council (BASIC) which criticised the UK government's failure to attend the Treaty conference, indicating a degree of indifference to the concerns of the 122 states who signed the treaty and setting a poor example to other nations;
5. **Urges** the UK government to attend future UN-led meetings which seek to take the Treaty forward including the planned High Level Conference in May 2018.
6. **Further urges** the UK government to give full support to this treaty: to sign and then ratify as soon as possible.
7. **Notes that** the UK government plans to replace our own nuclear weapons that will continue to be wholly dependent on a regular supply of missiles from, and regular maintenance by, the United States at a cost, including construction and running, of over £200 billion.
8. **Calls upon** the UK Government to cancel the current Trident replacement contracts, to spend the billions of pounds saved on real human needs, both here and abroad.

Passed with 1 abstention up to clause 6 and 2 abstentions and 1 against for 7 & 8

4. PALESTINE 100 YEARS AFTER THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

London & South East Region

1. **Notes** that November 2017 marks the centenary of the Balfour Declaration by the UK Government about the future of Palestine as a shared Jewish and Arab homeland which established the “dual obligation” that became part of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine:
 - (i) the establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish people ...;
 - (ii) the clear understanding that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.
2. **Believes** that attention should be drawn to failure to respect or carry out the second part of the dual obligation as the land allocated to Palestinians has dwindled to tiny broken-up areas, and over 620,000 settlers live in illegal Israeli settlements built on Palestinian land.;
3. **Whilst acknowledging** Israel’s right to full membership of the UN **believes** that peace talks will achieve little while Palestinians are denied the right to be citizens of, or to have the same rights as other citizens of a sovereign UN member state.

The proposed clause on an apology was lost by 10-5 (with 5 abstentions).

The remaining clause and the proposed amendment were deferred to a future meetings with advocates for both one and two state solutions so that we could understand the detail better before reaching a conclusion.

4. **Urges** the UK Government to recognise the Arab state of Palestine alongside the Jewish state of Israel and to do all in its power at the UN, to achieve a lasting and peaceful two state solution in Palestine

Proposed Amendment: Delete ‘the Arab state of Palestine alongside the Jewish state of Israel’ and insert ‘that the two state solution with separate Jewish and Palestinian states is no longer viable’,

Proposed Amendment: Delete ‘two state solution in Palestine.’ and insert ‘solution by promoting a state in which Arabs now living in Israel and Palestinians now living in the West Bank or Gaza have full rights as citizens alongside their Jewish fellow citizens.’

5. SRI LANKA

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1. **Notes** that it is 8 years since the war in Sri Lanka ended and the hardships and distress of the North and East people, especially widows, is the same as before, and that restrictions on freedom of expression remain
2. **Call upon** the UK government to press for rapid implementation of calls for an international, independent judicial investigation in line with the UN Human Rights Council resolution of 2015 into the crimes committed by both parties (i.e Sri Lanka Government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam [LTTE]) to expedite the Peace and Reconciliation Process.
3. **Believes that** such international involvement will help the people in the North and East to build some trust and faith in the outcome of the investigation.

Unanimously passed

6. HOW DID DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD DIE?

London & South East Region

1. **Notes** that the UN General Assembly reached an open verdict (1962) on the causes of the crash of the plane carrying the UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld on a peace mission in the Congo in 1961, making possible an independent UK-led inquiry in 2013;
2. **Welcomes** the three UN General Assembly resolutions which it triggered, pursuing newly discovered evidence of foul play;
3. **Regrets** that the UK has acted slothfully in its responses to the UN investigation, failing to co-sponsor any of the GA resolutions and resistant to sharing documents even though more than sixty years have elapsed;
4. **Urges** the UK government to cooperate fully with the UN investigators, and share relevant documents (after more than sixty years), held by MI5, MI6 and GCHQ, all of which were active in the region at the time of the event.

Unanimously passed

7. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE UN

London & South East Region

1. **Calls upon** the UN to reinvigorate the issue of the representation of women at all levels in the UN (including the highest) as a matter of urgency.

Unanimously passed

Additional resolutions consider in the afternoon

8. YEMEN AND SAUDI ARABIA

London & South East Region

1. **Calls** upon the UK Government to exert immediate pressure upon Saudi Arabia to
 - a. Lift its blockade of all ports including Hodeida and Sana'a airport in Yemen in order to allow food, medical and other humanitarian aid agency supplies to enter the country;
 - b. Lift its blockade of all ports on commercial supplies of fuel, food and essential goods and equipment;
 - c. Allow the World Health Organisation to bring in cranes to Hodeida to provide access to humanitarian supplies and commercial supplies via the port.
 - d. Stop denying journalists access to rebel areas and allow them to land at Sana'a airport
2. **Calls upon** the UK Government to use all means at its disposal including permanent membership of the Security Council to initiate peace talks and establish a peace process between the warring parties
3. **Calls upon** the UK Government
 - a. To **explain** what discussions it has had with Saudi Arabia to urge an end to the blockade of humanitarian supplies
 - b. To **redouble** its efforts at the Security Council to secure a lifting of the Saudi Arabian humanitarian aid blockade
4. Calls upon the UK Government to suspend arms supplies to Saudi Arabia unless Saudi Arabia
 - a. **ceases** the blockade of both aid agency and commercial supplies of food, medical supplies, fuel and essential goods is lifted;
 - b. **ceases** the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure; and
 - c. **actively engages** in peace talks and starts a peace process with the Houthis

Amended on screen and passed

9. NORTH KOREA

London & South East Region

1. **Notes** the dangerous degree of hostility and climate of fear on the North Korean issue.
2. **Calls** upon the UN to accept the fact that North Korea is a nuclear power;
3. **Believes** that along with all other nuclear powers, North Korea must commit itself formally and irrevocably to a no-first-strike policy
4. **Believes** that provided this is agreed and acceded to, in order to assist North Korea to move towards prosperity, and to ensure that the country becomes part of the international community, sanctions against North Korea should begin to be phased out, and aid provided to mitigate the current hardship experienced by vulnerable groups.
5. **Believes further** that as part of the agreement, all sides should stop issuing threats and drop the unproductive and provocative war games in the region.
6. **Believes** all sides should take part in meaningful talks to reduce tension and produce meaningful outcomes.

Amended on screen and passed