



United Nations Association

Westminster Branch

Campaigning for a strong, credible and effective UN

The Westminster UNA website: a 20-year long chronicle of our activity

2001 [Making the best of the WCAR under the shadow of 9/11](#)

Background The UN World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) is remembered for foundering on two important issues; the legacy of slavery and claims for reparations and apologies by certain States, and the Palestine/Israeli stand-off. To wide dismay, the US walked out. Days later, '9/11' dominated the world's headlines. Terrorism displaced racism as the priority. For months, an international stand-off resulted in continued failure to agree both the Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action. Westminster UNA was the first to access both documents, reducing their seventy pages to a 12-point Action Plan which it launched on 12 December.

2005 [Questioning the legality of the invasion of Iraq](#)

Background Lord Goldsmith's Opinion which influenced the UK's decision showed the difficulty all governments face when preparing resolutions to present to the UN Security Council. Westminster UNA listed five partial observations on different aspects of the invasion of Iraq and how the UN Security Council might approach future similar challenges.

2005 [Paddy Ashdown's address marking the 60th anniversary of the UN](#)

Background Westminster UNA coordinated a service at St Paul's cathedral to mark the UN's 60th anniversary. HM the Queen led a congregation of 2000 including the diplomatic corps, the cabinet and civic leaders nationwide. HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and Tony Blair, prime minister, read the lessons and there were contributions by UNA Chairman, Sir Richard Jolly and young representatives of all leading faiths. Paddy Ashdown, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered the address.

2007 [HRH Prince Turki Al-Faisal sets out the new challenges facing the UN](#)

Background: Through the introduction of Prince Mohsin Ali Khan, our joint Vice-president, Westminster UNA arranged for HRH Prince Turki, Saudi-Arabia's former ambassador to the UK to speak at our meeting in the House of Lords, *en route* to his new appointment as ambassador to the United States.

2008 [Sir Richard Jolly sets out why there is a 'right to development'](#)

Background: The financial crisis of 2007–2008 led to great pressure on governments to review their overseas aid programmes at the same time that the UN Millennium Development Goals were achieving widespread traction. Sir Richard Jolly, Chairman of UNA-UK, urged the '3rd UN, comprising non-government groups to demand governments take action for implementation of core elements of the UN's mission.

2009 [Somali Joint Statement provides diaspora with sense of empowerment](#)

Background: Further deterioration of the political situation in Somalia led its UK diaspora to seek ways it could demonstrate its solidarity with efforts to bring peace and eliminate piracy by coastal communities. Westminster UNA mobilised the diaspora and provided guidance for many years through the [World G18 Somalia](#) website, followed worldwide.

2011 [Time for strong and effective UN Statement on the Libyan situation](#)

Background: Noting the deteriorating situation in Libya, Westminster UNA listed demands on the British government to take clearly identified moves towards securing reduction in hostilities (23 January). Later announcements (28 February, 17 March) commented on this fast-moving tragedy.

2012 [The Olympic Truce, historic and universal; for all the peoples](#)

Background: The UK's admirably set out to promote the spirit of the Olympic Truce but its style was clumsy and selective in choosing civic partners. Westminster commented on this to the House of Lords. In frustration, working with colleagues, challenged the International Olympic Committee (IOC) similarly. While the IOC's Olympic Truce Facebook group had attracted only 300 followers in ten months, the Westminster Facebook group gathered 12,000 followers in four weeks, in 92 countries including the Vatican and tanker drivers in the Hindu Kush.

2012 [Challenging 'Equality Lite' becoming the new UK human rights standard](#)

Background: The Coalition Government's commitment to progressing the Equalities and Human Rights agenda was called into question as events indicated the end of over 40 years Of public funding for local equalities and human rights organisations. With the Equalities And Human Rights Commission's budget being slashed and with many of its functions likely to be taken over or removed. Westminster invited Sir Bob Hepple to spell out the dangers in the government's proposals.

2018 [The UN SDGs should not be terra incognita to Westminster and Whitehall](#)

Background: Westminster UNA Young Professionals had noted that, despite its exhortations to others, the government had failed to set a lead in environmental initiatives on the SDGs and, further, parliament itself was lagging behind other Commonwealth legislatures in this direction, leading to pained replies to the Westminster YPs' letters from parliamentary managers.

2014 [It is time to promote the Hammarskjöld Commission Report](#)

Background: The publication of the Hammarskjöld Commission Report which had explored new evidence about the plane crash in which Hammarskjöld and others died had pointed international attention towards the evasiveness of the UK and other governments. Westminster UNA coordinated a briefing for the diplomatic community and then set up and has since maintained the [Hammarskjöld Inquiry news page](#), recognised by the UN's Dag Hammarskjöld Library and others as the most reliable source of information on the matter.

2014 [Time for all top UN appointments to show transparency \(3 December\)](#)

Background: Having joined the 'One for Seven Billion' Campaign which advocates a more transparent selection process for the post of UN Secretary-General than that used to date, Westminster UNA shared its concern that the campaign does not extend to cover appointments for other top UN posts.

2017 [Westminster UNA sets out its policies on multiple issues \(12 April\)](#)

Background: In reaffirming its support for initiatives take by UNA-UK, Westminster UNA restated its own position on key policy issues. These included Human Rights, Nuclear Weapons, The Responsibility to Protect, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Conservation and the Environment and statements on 27 further issues.

2017 [The challenges facing Mark Lowcock, the new UN OCHA chief](#)

Background: The appointment of Mark Lowcock, the latest in an unbroken succession of British OCHA chiefs, appeared to establish the UK's 'squatters rights' to this important UN posting. Westminster UNA along with others questioned this.

2020 [Westminster UNA hosts former diplomat's call for post-Brexit 'global Britain](#)

Background: At a time of continuing uncertainty on Britain's place in a post-Brexit world, Westminster UNA invited Sir Peter Marshall to set out why the UK should remain as globally oriented once it leaves the EU as it was 75 years ago at the foundation of the United Nations.

2020 [P5 states targeted for continuing failure to secure resolution in Syria](#)

Background: Westminster UNA continues its early criticism (news item, 10 May 2012) of the failure of the Security Council, principally its P5 members, to tackle the situation in Syria.

2020 [Former diplomat Sir Peter Marshall chronicles the UN's seventy-five years](#)

Background: Following a long diplomatic career, serving with UK missions to the UN and later as Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General, Sir Peter writes a personal letter to members of the Westminster United Nations Association on the occasion of the UN's seventy-fifth anniversary.

2020 ["All Together Now! A UN75 reflection on our multilateral future"](#)

Background: In anticipation of the UN Secretary-General's visit to London to mark the 75th anniversary of the opening session of the General Assembly, Sir Peter recalls events leading up to and following the creation of the United Nations.

2020 [Early British contributions to post-war international organisations](#)

Background: Westminster UNA welcomes an important monograph detailing UK involvement during the UN's formative years, introducing those who helped in those early years.

2021 [The campaign to name United Nations Green, in the heart of London](#)

Background: We searched long for a location which by name change could remind all that the UN General Assembly first met in London. Once found, the campaign lasted five more years.

2022 [The inaugural annual event to mark the UN's first meeting in London](#)

Background: Having secured the naming of United Nations Green, Westminster set about utilising this to establish an annual event to mark London's centrality in the UN's creation.