

## Frequently asked questions

### Striving for Change – UNA-UK Draft Strategic Plan 2011-15

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#### Why do we need a new strategic plan?

UNA-UK has achieved a great deal in recent years. We are now in a much stronger financial position and our policy work is more focussed and effective. The UNA-UK Board wants to build on these successes and develop a new strategic plan for the following reasons:

- We have reached the end of the period for our current objectives;
- We want to ensure that UNA-UK can operate effectively and sustainably during the next four years, during which, for example, the UN Millennium Development Goals will reach their final phase and negotiations will be begin on an Arms Trade Treaty;
- We recognise that the external environment for the third sector in the UK is undergoing a period of change, in funding, legislative and operational terms, and it is essential for UNA-UK to keep up;
- We have a new Chairman and Executive Director in post; and
- We want to use this opportunity to increase our impact and diversify our funding base.

This new plan will equip UNA-UK members, supporters, Board and staff with momentum, clarity of purpose and a working platform on which to build a vibrant organisation.

#### How was the draft plan developed?

A first draft of the plan was developed over the last 12 months in consultation with UNA-UK members through seven regional 'roadshows' held around the UK. At these events, members provided suggestions on UNA-UK's vision, mission, policy priorities and objectives, and feedback on working methods.

Input was also sought from other stakeholders – including youth members and key partners in the UN, government, Parliament and NGOs.

The draft was published in June 2011 on the UNA-UK website and made available to members and branches participating in UNA-UK's Policy Conference on 18 June. At the conference, it was discussed with those present, and the policy content amended and endorsed. After the conference, a new draft was produced in the light of feedback received at the event, and subsequently approved by the Board.

On 29 July 2011, the Board wrote to all UNA-UK members asking for feedback on this revised draft. A compendium of all feedback received is available from [www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting](http://www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting)

#### What's in the plan?

- UNA-UK's vision: a safer, fairer and more sustainable world based on effective multilateral institutions, cooperation and the rule of law.
- UNA-UK's mission: to support the work and principles of the UN, and all efforts to make it stronger, more credible and more effective.
- How we plan to achieve this mission:
  - Connect people in the UK to the work and values of the UN
  - Influence decision-makers and opinion-shapers to support UN goals
  - Stimulate debate and action on how to make the UN more effective

By influencing at the decision-making level and nurturing support at the popular level, we will strive to secure policy outcomes and foster a vibrant civil society in the UK that is responsive to international developments.

## What are UNA-UK's focus areas?

Over the next four years, UNA-UK plans to focus its policy work on three programmes:

- A safer world (peace and security)
- A fairer world (human rights, humanitarian and social issues)
- A sustainable world (international development and environment)

As a small organisation with limited resources, it is essential that UNA-UK prioritises its work and focus on the areas where it believes it can have the greatest impact. UNA-UK has therefore, in consultation with its membership, identified three specific priorities for each of these areas (see section 5 of the draft strategic plan).

UNA-UK has also identified three themes that cut across our programmes: gender, population and effective UN institutions.

## What will we do to achieve progress?

- Raise our profile by increasing media engagement, improving the quality and reach of UNA-UK publications and overhauling the UNA-UK website.
- Ramp up our campaigning work by working more intensively and strategically with decision-makers, developing a stronger profile in government and Parliament, producing better campaigning tools and building more effective relationships with a range of partners.
- Expand our education work by supporting teaching about the UN at all levels, producing more practical resources for members and supporters and finding new ways for members to engage with UNA-UK's national campaigning and advocacy work.

- Strive to have an international impact, while UNA-UK will maintain its UK focus, most of its policy areas, from nuclear disarmament to climate change, require action at the international level. UNA-UK will therefore engage more with civil society in other countries as well as diplomatic missions in the UK, seeking ways to communicate our views and engage them in dialogue on peace, development and human rights.
- Engage with business, the private sector is increasingly a key player in many of the UN's spheres of interest, from environmental protection to labour rights. By engaging with businesses, in particular through the UK Network of the UN Global Compact, and developing relationships with their staff, we hope to build awareness of the UN and human rights, environmental and security issues.

UNA-UK will, of course, continue to publicise human rights and other abuses by countries and private-sector organisations, and to lobby hard for international action to remedy specific wrongs and to create more stringent legal frameworks to take both states and companies to task.

## An engaged and thriving membership base is crucial if progress is to be achieved. How does UNA-UK plan to attract more members?

UNA-UK will work to attract a range of different people into membership:

- Young supporters – by engaging the under 18s through educational institutions we hope to foster a lifelong interest in the UN.
- UNA Youth – by developing our Model UN and our careers/skills-building work, we will seek to expand our young adult membership, including by offering incentives to those active in our 45 university and school branches.

- Established professionals – by developing new ways for busy individuals to engage with us and by giving those with time a chance to use it, we seek to attract these well-informed and skilled people.
- Young professionals – by providing a tailored set of events and resources, we hope to encourage members of our 3,000-strong young professionals network to take up full UNA-UK membership.

### **What role will UNA members play in delivering this four-year plan?**

UNA-UK members will continue to play a vital role in helping the organisation to achieve its objectives. This will include identifying emerging policy issues through regular policy conferences, lobbying MPs, recruiting new members and running local Model UN events.

Throughout the country, UNA-UK members are raising the organisation's profile and building support for the UN amongst the UK public. The UNA-UK Board and staff will work hard to improve the resources and support given to members, and to improve and increase the methods by which members can engage with UNA-UK's national activities. This will include strengthening UNA-UK's network of local branches, regions and nations.

### **How will we be able to finance all this?**

In order to achieve these ambitious objectives, UNA-UK must ensure that it is well-resourced and stable. For this reason, UNA-UK would like to seek charitable status and merge with the UNA Trust, a related but legally-separate charitable trust.

### **What are the benefits of charitable status?**

There are compelling reasons for UNA-UK to seek charitable status and merge with the UNA Trust:

- It will save time and money – by cutting down on the staff and financial burden of running two organisations, UNA-UK will be able to devote more time and money to its policy work.

- It will help attract funds – as a charity, UNA-UK can boost its income through Gift Aid. Charitable status also increases our chances of securing support from charitable foundations, philanthropists and members of the public who prefer to give to charitable organisations.

- UNA-UK can have these benefits without changing what its works on – changes to charity law mean that we can deliver our objectives within a charitable framework. We have sought legal advice on the contents of our strategic plan and proposed activities, and concluded that we can continue to work on the same issues as a charity. In fact, a substantial part of our work is currently funded by charitable sources and so already subject to charitable requirements such as demonstrating 'public benefit'.

- The work of UNA-UK branches will not be affected – as legally and financially autonomous bodies, **the work of our branches, regions and nations will not be affected if UNA-UK becomes a charity**. If anything, serving a single, clearly-focussed organisation might make it easier for branches to secure new members, fundraise for UNA-UK, and explain who we are.

### **In what other ways will UNA-UK generate income?**

We are determined to ensure that all our income-generation activities help us not only to build a secure financial foundation, but also to support our vision and objectives. We will therefore focus on:

- More effective partnerships – by targeting like-minded NGOs, we will strive to build a broader base of

support and encourage 'supporter' membership of UNA-UK. At present, UNA-UK has some 240 such supporter members, and belongs to a number of NGO coalitions.

- A schools Model UN programme – by running a national event, UNA-UK will encourage young people to learn about the UN, promote teaching on global issues, build young people's skills and raise money for further educational work. We also hope to encourage more schools to become supporter members of UNA-UK through this initiative.
- Diversifying funding – we will work to build relationships with more charitable foundations and government departments in order to diversify our funding base and create more opportunities to influence policy decisions.
- Providing training on UN issues – by delivering Model UN skills-building events to businesses, NGOs and other organisations, we hope to generate income and to build awareness of the UN and global issues amongst this audience. We would also seek to promote individual UNA-UK membership to their employees.
- Charging non-members for services – UNA-UK will increasingly reserve more for its members, for example, by creating a 'members only' section on our website and making attendance at events conditional on membership.

We will also apply this to our diplomatic engagement by charging missions, who cannot become supporter members of UNA-UK, for publications and specific events. We hope that this will not only boost income but also help us to communicate our views on peace, development and human rights issues.

## **How will members be able to monitor progress on the plan?**

All paid-up members of UNA-UK will be able to hold the Board to account at the Annual General Meetings.

Members will also be able to engage with this process through the UNA-UK website, and will receive regular updates in UNA-UK's e-newsletters and publications, including the print and online versions of our magazine.

In addition, the draft strategic plan sets out a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, including yearly operational plans, a mid-period review and regular oversight by members of the Board, the majority of whom were either elected by the national UNA membership or nominated by regional and national UNA committees.

## **What happens now?**

1. At its meeting on 29 September 2011, the Board approved the final draft of the plan and agreed to put it to the UNA-UK membership for adoption at the General Meeting on 24 November 2011.
2. All paid-up members of UNA-UK are encouraged to read the information on the General Meeting available at [www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting](http://www.una.org.uk/generalmeeting) and take part in the General Meeting.

Members who are not able to come to the meeting are encouraged to send in a proxy voting form, also available online.

**For hard copies of all the relevant documentation and supporting information, please contact UNA-UK on [membership@una.org.uk](mailto:membership@una.org.uk)**