

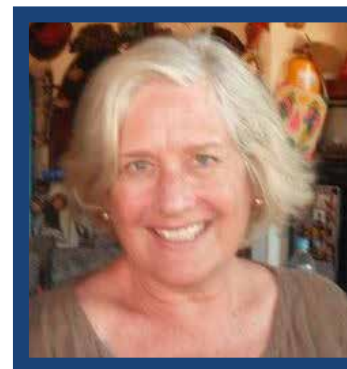


UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

of Greater Philadelphia

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Dear members and friends of UNA-GP,

There is nothing like being in another country and culture than your own to give you perspective, and in some cases inspiration! I had the opportunity to be here in Colombia last week on election day and it has shown me a number of ways that democracies can be different: in both good ways and bad. One of the aspects of Colombia’s system that I am frankly envious of is the very reduced timespan of the elections. The Congressional and Senate elections were Sunday March 9th and only on the 10th were the presidential candidates allowed to register and kick off their campaigns for the voting on May 25th. Certainly there has been pre-campaign maneuvering, but nothing like the campaigning and expense of advertising that we endure in the US. Another interesting feature is the diversity of political parties, 9 parties running Congressional and Senate candidates, and at least 5 serious candidates for President. The voting was on a Sunday, so a day off for most people. The military are not allowed to vote and local political officials are not allowed

to be involved in campaigning. There is a strict no-alcohol policy from the night before election to 6pm the day after, applying to all stores, bars, and restaurants. The most intriguing thing to me was the discovery of the “voto en blanco” or blank vote to indicate “none of the above”. In the Colombian constitution there is a provision that if 50% plus one of the votes are blank ballots, then the election must be held again with a completely different slate of candidates! Despite a lot of campaigning for the voto en blanco this time, only 7% of the congressional votes were blank, however it did go into effect for the Andean parliament (widely considered a useless bureaucracy) and a second election will be held for that. On the down side of the Colombian process, over 200 of the 1000 candidates had received threats during the campaign and required government security. One presidential candidate, recently returned from 17 years in political exile, was actually attacked while her car was traveling to an event, though she was not injured. And,

even though the election came the day after national celebrations of International Women’s Day, there are provinces that still have no women in their congressional delegation. Colombia also has a much more positive attitude to UN observers for elections, welcoming their presence and facilitating their observation, compared to the US resistance to any international observation. This newsletter, as usual, is packed with announcements and reports on events. We will have a lively spring and look forward to our annual membership meeting in June and our increasingly traditional Global Garden Party in July, ways for our members to gather and build our working community. I look forward to being back in Philadelphia in early April can catching up with all our efforts!

Sincerely,

Mary Day

Mary Day Kent,
President, UNA-GP

A few words from the Executive Director

From Christiaan's Desk



My desk being my laptop and my laptop being in Auckland, New Zealand, I write now with experiencing the extent of that global connection stuff. Philadelphia is so far away, it becomes part of the global scene with only the broad strokes of social life filtering through. I assume that such works both ways.

Being in Auckland, sports news is about rugby, and sometime cup sailing, and rugby, and reports about the English soccer league (after all, the UK Commonwealth still carries cultural and social weight), and rugby; here, rugby seems to provide many a Maori with career options, high visibility and a way to undo years of structural social violence.

We like New Zealand, at least what we witnessed on this second trip. Folks from many parts of the world have made NZ home; the food scene is as varied as in



Philadelphia; education is very much a public thing, with all schools having the same level of funding, and no politician more interested in building prisons than building schools. I did not see any metal detector when entering the court of justice (happened to pass by), nor the city hall. On the other hand, New Zealanders have embraced the connected camera. Stores, stations, sidewalks, parks, taxis, everywhere there are these small cameras recording constantly. And Kiwis, as they call themselves, engage in the usual protests, cameras or not. Yesterday I witnessed a small demonstration marking the third anniversary of Fukushima, which made me wonder about Philadelphia.

The last weeks have been full of action. We got intern Aboubacar Doukoure, a high school student from SanKofa Freedom Charter with us, and he will work on the links between human rights and neo-colonialism, his subject of interest. We also interviewed coop students and two will help us out with planning several events, including the P3 Tournament, on which James Parsons is working hard. We are also getting all in gear for the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative conference on April 10 and I hope

that many of our members will attend this important event, even if only for one or two of the special sessions. My friends Tammy Murphy and Anastasia Shown, both busy, both pregnant, joined me helping the Parkway High School for Peace and Social Justice where there was a dramatic lack of teachers for a while. Marietta Tanner and I are working on getting a great event together for UN Day 2014, and in doing so, we also presented at the I-Café about the link between Mandela's freedom and Philadelphia's Leon Sullivan. Planning the Red Cross Red Crescent Day on May 8 is shaping up, but we still need to secure the venue. Board members Carla Campbell and Ed Gracely are working with me on that event.



Of course I can go on and on, you know me, but I want to close with a picture I took early in the morning of Martin Luther King Day, near the zoo, when I went to UCity to pick up Ariane and Jesse. I stopped the car to take this picture of Philadelphia, silhouetted against the sunrise. It means that as a volunteer, you will witness many beautiful moments. Oh, don't forget to call your representative and demand that (s) he votes for full funding of the UN Peacekeeping Operations. Just do it.

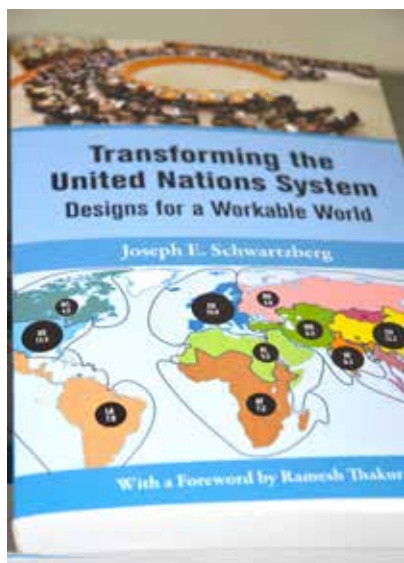
Christiaan, Executive Director

Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World

By: Christiaan Morssink



Arame and Julie “manning” the reception table at our Feb 23 event



On February 23, at the Fairmount Waterworks Interpretative Center for a full house we had Dr Schwartzberg leading a discussion on Reform of the United Nations; where he emphasized the need for a weighted voting system, a regional clustering of the countries' representations and improvement to the law making capacity of the General Assembly. I want to react in more detail to his suggestions in a blog or later newsletter, but for now want to thank the volunteers and our board members for making this event a good one. It inspired me to try re-starting the speaker series of a few years back. Stay tuned about that.

Cheers from New Zealand, where a cyclone is hitting the North Island and I am sending this before we may have a power failure on our hands.



Sullivan Principles

By Jesse Ferrante



On the 28th of February, at McAllister Hall, UNAGP and members of Drexel University gathered to celebrate the teachings and effects of the Sullivan Principles on the world. Leon Sullivan developed the Sullivan Principles as a part of an apartheid protest in 1977. The goal of the Principles was to have large companies like General Motors, of which Sullivan was a member of the board, refuse to employ citizens of South Africa as long as apartheid was taking place. The hope was that, with enough companies, the economic strain would force an end to apartheid. In an attempt to honor Sullivan in an appropriate way, some area leaders and activists proposed renaming the Philadelphia International Airport after Sullivan.



Our Alternative Model United Nations Conference

March 1

On the impact and uses of social media when promoting social justice through the rule of law.
By Christiaan Morssink



Delegates from Boys Latin High, one of 5 participating high schools

Organized by Daniel Bu, Minsoo Kim and Stephanie McAndrew, with input from board member Prachi Potdar (Charlotte Benham, who was instrumental in the early start of the conference, could not attend and we wish her speedy recovery), our second MUN on the Rule of Law was held at Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania. It was attended by students from five high schools, although only two had gotten proper training beforehand to handle the rather esoteric concepts of justice, rule of law and social movement. We had more students than we expected and the room was packed.

Jessica Hilburn Holmes, CEO of the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, was our keynote speaker and she delivered a strong personalized address about living and working in and

on the rule of law and the quest for justice on a global scale. Her talk set the stage for a discussion in the plenary session, under very formal and strict rules, headed by Daniel Bu. It took a while to let the roles of “delegates” sink in. Also, the formula for the right to speak, in parliament often handled by the speaker’s office, was reduced to showing placards when called. It wasn’t the best of formats to allow a debate by all for all. Yet the students showed goodwill and eagerness. I was allowed to say a few words of welcome on behalf of the UNA-GP and discussed briefly the times of organizing and social protests, when I was the age of the current delegates. After lunch, the breakout sessions (three) provided the opportunity for all to get into more direct discussions and work on ideas to improve the usage of social media. It was by far the best period for dialogue and networking.

During the second plenary session, where we intended to integrate the discussions and prepare a formal resolution, things became a bit hectic and the attention span of many of the delegates reached its end point. Stephanie had set up a live tweet system, with the intent to solicit remarks, suggestions and constructive input. It worked well for a few minutes, and the novel idea has great possibilities, but it didn’t take long for the tweet discussions becoming a exercise in testosterone-driven

dialogue. We had to shut the tweet format, to keep the attention to the proceedings. The session became filled with Daniel’s pleas of “Decorum Delegates” and “order, order”. All in good fun, don’t get me wrong, but we had clearly reached the limits of tolerance among many in the conference. We closed the conference with a draft of a resolution that called on all governments and all NGOs to promote and invoke the use of social media in all discussions that promote the Rule of Law and the quest for Social Justice. We closed at 4PM and our team, which also included Jesse and Arame, packed up our stuff and we went home, tired, and with a good feeling of accomplishment. Please find more pictures on our Facebook page and our website.



UNA-GP Activities

(all tentative) for 2014, other events are being planned and will be added case by case

Activity/Event	Date	Day	Time	Location/info
PGWI annual Conference	April 10	Thursday	All Day	Drexel U. topic: Water Justice is Urban/ peri-urban settings.
Planting a (Fruit) Tree (Earth Day)	April 22	Tuesday	All Morning	TBD. Final activity of Youth Building Roots program 2013-14.
UNA-GP Board Meeting	April 26	Saturday	10A-Noon	TBD. All members welcome to attend
International Red Cross/ Red Crescent Day	May 8	Thursday	6.00-8.00PM	Tbd. Working topic: Health Services for Children lost in Conflicts. Raising funds for UNICEF
UNAUSA Annual Membership Meeting	June 7,8,9	Saturday-Monday	All day	Tbd. In Wash DC.
UNA-GP Annual Membership Meeting	June 19	Thursday	6.00-8.00P	Tbd. Please note that this meeting is on the eve of World Refugee Day.
Annual Garden Party	July 13	Sunday	4.00-9.00P	146 Pelham Rd. Our Fundraising event and commemoration of World Day for International Justice (July 17)
UNA-GP Board meeting	Aug. 21	Thursday	5.30-7.00P	Tbd. All members welcome to attend
P3 Soccer Tournament	Sept. 21	Sunday	All Day	UPenn Adams Field. Soccer and family peace festival in honor of International Day of Peace
Peace Day Events	Sept 21	Sunday	All Day	See www.PeaceDayPhilly.org
Our Diets, Our Planet; sustainability re food	Oct 16	Thursday	6.00-8.00P	Tbd. World Food Day. Kick-off of our Youth Building a discussion about Roots program 2014-15
Our Faiths and the United Nations	Oct 24	Friday	All Day	UN Day (69th anniversary) A flurry of activities aiming at the faith based communities, to strategically embrace the work of the United Nations System
UNA-GP Board Meeting	Nov 15	Saturday	10A-Noon	Tbd. All members welcome to attend
Celebrating the legacy of Eleanor Roosevelt	Dec 10	Wednesday	6.00-8.30P	UDHR Day. Topic and venue tbd.

Save the Date:

**Philadelphia Global Water Initiative 7th Annual
Conference:**

**"Urban Water Solutions in the
Developing World: Sustainable services
and just policies for the poor"**

Representatives
from the United
Nations, World Bank,
USEPA, International
Water and Sanitation
Leaders, and Major
NGOs

April 10, 2014

**Behrakis Grand Hall - Drexel University
Philadelphia, PA**

**Reception to follow at the Fairmount
Water Works Interpretive Center**

**Early Online Registration
Students \$10 General \$60
Non-Government Organizations \$40
Visit www.pgwi.org for ticket information**

The Philadelphia Global Water Initiative (PGWI) is a network of interested organizations and individuals committed to helping to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals for water/sanitation throughout the world. By utilizing the resources and expertise of the Philadelphia Region, we work to increase global access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services.

Carolina's International News Picks

By: Carolina Torres



The Senate has voted to approve the nomination of Janet Yellen as the next leader of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

With the vote on January 6th 2014, Janet Yellen, 67, became the first woman to serve as America's banking chief, heading an institution that was established in 1913. Dr. Yellen will serve as Head of the Board of Governors until February 3, 2018.

To Read More Click [Here](#)

Is Mexico's Economy Set To Emerge From China's Shadow?

Mexico and other countries associated with the new "MINT" (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey) acronym are expected to experience steady economic growth in the next decade. For Mexico this economic turnaround is accredited to President Enrique Peña Nieto's push for free trade agreements.

To Read More Click [Here](#)

Website Welcomes Wildlife Trafficking Whistleblowers

A group of international organisations fighting illicit wildlife trafficking has unveiled a new website aimed at assisting whistleblowers who want to aid in the fight against wildlife crimes.

To Read More Click [Here](#)

Venezuela: Fears of more protest violence as opposing sides prepare to march in Caracas

In response to several weeks of anti-Maduro protests by Venezuelan students, pro-government Venezuelans have been preparing to take to the streets. Although the past protests have left 21 dead and hundreds injured there seems to be no interest peaceful meditations by the government.

To Read More Click [Here](#)

UN agricultural agency hails 'historic' new commitment to end hunger in Africa by 2025.

The head of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) José Graziano da Silva has welcomed a breakthrough commitment by African leaders to end hunger on the continent by 2025.

To Read More Click [Here](#)



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

of Greater Philadelphia

You can help the United Nations Association out!

Have any ideas for fundraising events? We're all ears! With the volume of projects the UNA-GP is constantly immersed in, we are always in need of more volunteers, no matter how much or how (seemingly!) little time you have to devote. Email Manisha Patel, (Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member) with your suggestions or any questions at mpatel@una-gp.org.

The UNA-GP is in need of funds for upcoming projects. In order to continue with extremely beneficial and enriching events, such as the Model UN, we need your help! Please donate whatever you can to the UNA-GP, and in turn, Philadelphians and beyond!

The UNA-GP March 2014 newsletter is a collaborative effort:

Content editor: Jesse Ferrante
 Layout and design editor: Kellie Widener
 Board liaison: Ed Gracely
 President: Mary Day Kent
 Executive Director: Christiaan Morssink

The UNA-GP is a chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA). Our website offers information about our mission, upcoming events, and ways to get involved, including joining and volunteering. In addition, we are on social media sites and send out our monthly newsletter. Take a look around!

Volunteers with all types of skill sets are welcome to work with the UNA-GP, in the short or long term. If interested, please contact:

Manisha Patel
 Volunteer Coordinator
 Board Member
mpatel@una-gp.org

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