Table of Contents:

- President's Letter .................................. 2
- From Christiaan's Desk ............................ 3
- Volunteer Coordinator Update .................... 5
- Spotlight on Human Rights ......................... 5
- IAGP Social Recap .................................. 6
- Human Rights Day 2016 ............................. 6
- Peace Keeping & Global Public Health .......... 7
- Human Rights Day Flyer ............................ 10
- Member's Day at the UN Flyer ..................... 11
- Upcoming Events .................................... 12

In This Issue:

- Peace Keeping & Global Public Heath
  
  Read this insightful piece by Christiaan Morssink! Page: 7

- Spotlight on Human Rights
  
  Learn more about our human rights organization of the month: Amnesty International
  
  Page: 5

Stay abreast of the UN five days per week with UN Wire. You can receive it free in your inbox here.
Leadership Changes Afoot at UNA-GP

Over the last years, Mary Day Kent wrote her president’s column for the second page of our newsletter. We got used to her advocacy-oriented opinions and her fondness for Colombia; indeed, we at UNA-GP are a bit more informed about Colombia’s major peace developments than most UNA members due to Mary Day’s updates.

Mary Day stepped back from the leadership as her term came to an end. At the membership meeting in October we elected Manisha Patel as her successor and we also, after being urged by the UNA-USA to “get in line”, created the post of vice-president, a post that Carol Jenkins accepted. Carol and Manisha will be the new leadership face of the UNA-GP, with executive support also provided by Ed Gracely as secretary and Barbara Nolan as the new treasurer.

This change also meant that we may see a contribution from Mary Day from time to time, but not at the same pace and not as a column. Manisha Patel has suggested that we should try a model where we feature each month a board member, either as a guest author or as an interviewee and make room on the second page for a specific topic of importance scheduled for the month ahead.

So, thank you Mary Day, and looking forward to working with Manisha and Carol.

Christiaan
Sitting at a small table in a small cafeteria in the small, but beautiful town of Cascais, in a small part of Europe, Portugal, nurturing small thoughts of reflection, while also battling a few larger dark clouds of political worry about neo-nationalism and reviving Germanic-Slavic tribalism.

One of those small reflections illuminates the accidental in our lives. For example, last month I wrote about Guterres, the new Secretary-General-to-be and about the Portuguese Carnation Revolution in 1974 which brought new hopes for the social democrats across Europe. Not even a month later I find myself strolling in Lisbon, playing tourist while my wife is chairing some expert meeting of the WHO; I step on a circle on the pavement of one of those myriads of squares of this capital city. Looking down, I see that I stepped on the memorial engrainment about the start of that revolution, right there, on that square, in that town which I had not visited before in my life.

Another small reflection that plays out in my brain refers to the work my wife is doing within the World Health Organization; forty some scientists from the several disciplines that span the topic of human nutrition, are working together, in English (sometimes haltingly and sometime hilarious) on issues that are relevant to the whole of humanity. Indeed, the public investment worldwide in science is one of the major (re)sources for organizing, marketing and expanding the work of the United Nations. The United Nations will not be supported by (nationally thinking) politicians, as Eleanor has pointed out, if not for the popular support of their electorates. Within that electorate, the scientists and the institutions of higher learning are most relevant for promoting the wellbeing of the UN System.
Yet, in my mind worries spin around as well, worries about the political dialogue in many counties that seem to trend towards a stronger nationalism with a national identity of and nostalgia for yesteryears. In many nations, large segments of the voting public express a strong resentment towards the forces of globalization (as dominated currently by neoliberalist thought and practice) and the accompanying dilution of social anchors, including that what constitutes 'WE'. Diversity may be a great way to learn about the other and oneself, but it can easily be transformed in a cauldron of negativity if people start to express the daily social and economic conflict in terms of ascribed labels. Speed of social transformations and openness of cultures are to be tested daily. In many ways, those who cannot or don't want to stand that test believe in the need to make Britain British again, or America Great again, or in the nostalgia and folklore of the Russian March, or Le Pen's drumbeat for a France that is of the French, or in Geert Wilder's appeal among those Dutch who like to see their dikes and levees as walls to "congregate" behind.

What worries me about these current movements, beyond the sheer fear that many minorities must feel in these trends, are two specific modern twists. First, there are clear indications that these so-called nationalists have a well-developed network of support that is INTERNATIONAL in scope. It seems that Russian nationalists work diligently with the UKIP in the UK, the NeoNazis in Germany, Le Pen in France, and with the white supremacists in the USA. And what binds these groups together is that they react to the globalizing of each nation and each economy with an ideology of whiteness, of white privilege or exceptionalism. Widespread, blatant racism is indeed a social political force that can kill the whole concept and apparatus of the United Nations.

The other twist refers to the fact that all these groups share a strong anti-Islam policy. In many situations they say so outright. Is this the modern version of the Antisemitism of yesterday? And how does this anti-Islamic stance creep into the national policies and politics? No minarets can be built in Switzerland; women's dress codes have been made a stressful policy problem in France. We can and should prevent the global political dialogue from becoming infused with explicit anti-religious policies and practices. I am a "non-believer," but I do recognize that any curtailing of any of the world's religions will eventually doom the United Nations. Hence, in my own small way I will keep working towards a proper respect of all for all in our own city, making it indeed a World Heritage City to be proud of; and in doing so keep the dream of a United Nations alive.
A Few Words From Our Volunteer Coordinator and President

UNA-GP’s Membership Committee has been meeting regularly in preparation for this year’s Model UN conferences and could use your help! Membership support helps in bringing programming for the local community, its schools and university students. Members are more connected to world issues through their participation in Chapter events and their involvement in UNA-USA/UN programs. They grow local support for United Nations ideals and its work in Philadelphia’s community.

Manisha Patel
mpatel@una-gp.org

Spotlight on Human Rights

Amnesty International

With its global staff and membership of 7 million, Amnesty International (AI) is one of the world's great warriors for human rights. AI, which began in 1961, operates in 160 countries. Its work includes investigating and exposing human rights abuses, lobbying governments and private interests on behalf of victims and mobilizing its members to change policies and practices. AI also supports people in claiming their rights through education and training. Each year AI produces a report on human rights practices in virtually every country in the world, including the United States. Opportunities for advocacy are offered on a constant basis and each fall a Write for Rights Campaign is undertaken to advocate for a specially selected group of activists who may be in jail or undergoing abuse from authorities. AI has offices in London, New York and other locations around the world. There is an active AI chapter in Philadelphia. Please see its Facebook page for more information.
Human Rights Day 2016: The Right to Education

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) speaks to the right of all people to a quality education. As the struggle to attain this goal plays out across the world, and here in Philadelphia, UNA-GP is dedicating its annual recognition of the UDHR, signed in 1948, to this fundamental right.

On Thursday, December 8, from 5:30 to 8 PM, UNA-GP has organized a program for this purpose at the Ethical Society of Philadelphia, 1906 Rittenhouse Square. Andrea Townrow from Women’s Campaign International will speak on their work educating future leaders around the globe. Local leadership perspectives on this struggle will be provided by Philadelphia City Councilwoman Helen Gym as well as representatives of POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild), a grass-roots, interfaith group with a strong presence in the fight for fair funding for all of Pennsylvania’s school districts. The program is free with light refreshments and cash bar.

On November 12, the UNAGP and GenUN-Penn hosted a social networking event for young professionals from Philadelphia. The event took place on Penn’s campus at the Arch, where community members from various schools, organizations, and companies enjoyed the evening over food and drinks. We shared information about the United Nations Association’s work across America, as well as updates on our upcoming events. We look forward to hosting more events to foster discussion and mobilize Philadelphia’s newest leaders.
The United Nations System, 72 years old and counting, is remarkably vibrant, broad in scope and supremely relevant for the welfare of the whole of humanity. The system is complex, constantly adapting, albeit not always fast and “pre-emptive”, and has been successful in many ways, on many occasions, and almost always within its technical agencies such as the IAEA, WHO, FAO. Over time, these agencies have adapted their mandates and their collaborative capacities, involved more and more civic organizations (NGO’s) in the policy processes and many have found a place within the now operational Sustainable Development Goals.

However, much more attention, especially by the large countries, is given to the political realm of the UN, especially the Security Council and the large-scale peace keeping operations it initiates, oversees and assesses. Indeed, the peace keeping force of the United Nations, our blue helmets, is one of most important showcases of the UN to the world; in a way, it is “the other leg” of its humanitarian/political relevance as found in the work of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees. And the peace keeping activities of the UN, now ongoing for close to 70 years, are judged regularly and loudly. They are judged by the world population mostly along two themes-- the behavior of the personnel on the ground, and the (public) health impact that the blue helmets have at home and in the host countries.

Leaving the problem of behavior (from illegal fraternization, to rape, murder, or corruption among other mischiefs) for another occasion and others, I took the occasion of the UN Day 2016 to reflect a bit on the issue of public health. (The slideshow of that talk can be found on our website.) The immediate reason was the political and moral fall-out from the cholera outbreak in Haiti, following recent reports from the UN and the courts on this matter. But public health issues have been or should have been a concern for peace keeping from the start. After all, peace keeping involves the transport of large numbers of people to new, often vulnerable, peoples and ecologies.

It took the Security Council close to 50 years to actually debate public health issues in its deliberations. The case at hand was the HIV-AIDS epidemic in the late eighties and nineties. The epidemic impacted on the health care of soldiers in the operational arenas and on the recruitment of soldiers for deployment in countries with a high fatality rate from HIV-AIDS; the case in point being Finnish soldiers coming home infected with the HIV virus. New policies were implemented, such as intense counseling and education of the troops, as well as a much more liberal approach regarding condom distribution. Following such studies as from the Dutch government, that reported 47% of the troops in the field having had sex with prostitutes or “friendly citizens”, the rules against fraternization with the local population were not abandoned but understood as being insufficient.

The other big scare in terms of deploying troops came with the Ebola outbreak in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some governments of TCC (troops contributing countries) insisted on
Peace Keeping & Global Public Health

bringing their people home, and others insisted that the troops stayed at base at all time as long as the outbreak was not contained. Again, troops underwent intense training, inspections and counseling. I do not have information about the mortality among troops as related to Ebola. A more problematic scenario unfolded however when the military medical services that are part and parcel of any large-scale troop deployment, got involved in assisting WHO, national governmental health systems and health care NGOs with providing health care for a very needy population. This new development is now a topic of intense debates between NGOs, WHO and the Security Council about how to handle the disconnect between available, high trained and supposedly well-supplied medical personnel in scenarios of incredibly high demand for services, that cannot be met by the local health professionals, nor the well-meaning NGOs such as DSF, CRS, etc.

The cholera outbreak in Haiti is now understood as the result of hygiene practices by troops from Nepal, who had among them soldiers who carried this disease, BUT WERE NOT SCREENED before deployment. The cholera epidemic in Haiti is a really dark chapter in the UN peace keeping operations, a chapter that is not yet finished and should have a very important appendix about how to never have to confront a similar scenario. Much research has been done and reported in the literature about the way the UN manuals about the deployment of troops for peace keeping cover medical preparation, training and close screening in the field, following incidents of failures of screening before departure and deployment. The results of those studies show that the manuals are good enough but that the strict implementation at the country level, before and during deployment, is not followed through by many of the 121 countries that currently provide troops. Indeed, the reports identify problems of local cultures, as well as problems with interpreting/equating military level “field” conditions with “basic sanitary and pharmaceutical principles”. Oversight is lacking sometimes to a shocking degree, with the Chief Medical Officers in the arena “unprepared and unable” to correct problems. According to these reports, soldiers have been deployed, and passed through screening, who were HIV positive, had active tuberculosis, carried cholera bacteria, or suffered from explicit mental health conditions.

120000 plus personnel are deployed by the UN, recruited from 121 countries. They all will be foreign entities in foreign ecologies, and each of them will get to feel the effects of “traveler’s disease”. Large among that is the problem of malaria, and for that matter dengue fevers and other communicable diseases. At any given day, 10 % of the UN troops are suffering from malaria and other such serious diseases, with at least one fatality per month. Beyond the problems of dealing with aggressive and sometimes lethal parties in these conflict areas, most health issues for the soldiers stem from hygiene and health conditions, in the camps and in the host countries. Moreover, all of them will bring home the effects of deployment, from PTSD, to chronic effects on the clinical health condition, to carrying infectious diseases. Overall, it behooves each TCC to be acutely aware of the public health impacts of their involvement with the UN Peace Keeping and we urge the WHO and the Security Council to work together to make sure each TCC has the proper health capacity to proudly participate in the good work that the UN Peace Keeping Program undertakes.
To read more about Peace Keeping and Public Health, please read:

https://theglobalobservatory.org/2016/09/peace-operations-united-nations-hippo-secretary-general/

https://theglobalobservatory.org/2016/09/peacekeeping-reform-united-nations-south-sudan-congo/

https://newint.org/features/2016/09/01/how-not-to-build-peace/

https://betterworldcampaign.org/un-peacekeeping/un-peacekeeping-101/


http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/18/world/americas/united-nations-haiti-cholera.html?_r=0

https://www.ipinst.org/2015/03/healing-or-harming-united-nations-peacekeeping-and-health

https://psmag.com/when-peacekeepers-become-disease-spreaders-b2c39274890ff#.s7ehzan7j

JOIN US IN RECOGNIZING

EDUCATION: OUR HUMAN RIGHT
AND ALL RIGHTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Be informed about the progress and struggle for quality public education on the global and local level. Presentations as well as Q&As will allow you to offer up your voice on this issue. Free to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Speakers
Helen Gym, Philadelphia City Councilwoman
Philadelphia Public Education: Organizing for Justice and Equity
Sheila Armstrong & David Mosenkis, Representatives of POWER
Public Education: The Struggle for Fair Funding
Andrea Townrow, Women’s Campaign International
Educating Future Leaders Around the Globe

DECEMBER 8, 2016 | 5:30-8PM
ETHICAL SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA
1906 RITTENHOUSE SQUARE PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

ORGANIZED ANNUALLY BY THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT INFO@UNA-GP.ORG OR GO TO UNA.GP.ORG
SAVE THE DATE: Friday, February 17, 2017

Members’ Day at the UN is one of the most important gatherings for UNA-USA during the year, and is a great opportunity for members to network with fellow UN supporters from around the country and hear from top UN voices. UNA-USA members and UN supporters will meet at the UN Headquarters to participate in a day of dynamic and informative discussion on the most pressing issues facing the United Nations. Members will get exclusive access to the UN, where they will hear from experts on topics like refugees and sustainable development, and network with community leaders, academics and students, and representatives from think tanks and like-minded organizations.

Online registration begins on December 1, 2016. Admission is on a first-come, first-served basis. Check [here](#) for updated as details and information

Thank you to those who participated last year in what was the largest gathering of UN supporters in the U.S. on a single day. It is exactly the kind of dedication the UN needs as it looks to take bold action and create a more sustainable world for us all.

Pre-Members' Day briefings will held on Thursday, February 16, 2017 in New York City. Please book travel accordingly.
## UNA-GP Upcoming Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location/Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Celebration of Human Rights Day       | December 8th  | Thursday | 5:30PM - 8PM | Topic: Rights to Education  
Speakers include Andrea Townrow from Women's Campaign International, Councilwoman Helen Gym, and representatives from POWER (Philadelphians organized to witness, empower, and rebuild)  
Attendance is free  
Light refreshments will be served. Cash Bar  
Location: Ethical Society of Philadelphia, 1906 Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia PA |
| Model UN Conference on Water          | January 16th  | Monday | All Day       | Join us for our college-student led conference that replicates the modern United Nations consulting system, giving high school students a chance to debate international issues  
Interested in attending the conference or getting involved? Learn more here.                                                                                                                             |
| Member's Day at the UN                | February 17th | Friday | All Day       | Join us in New York City, where UNA-USA members and UN supporters will meet at the UN Headquarters to participate in a day of dynamic and informative discussion on the most pressing issues facing the United Nations.                                         |
You can help the United Nations Association!

Have any ideas for fundraising events? We’re all ears! With the volume of projects the UNA-GP is constantly involved in, we are always in need of 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 questions any time at mpatel@una-gp.org.

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

If this newsletter was forwarded or shared with you, you can get your own subscription and keep up with our chapter's activities! Sign up on our website.

The UNA-GP December newsletter is a collaborative effort:

Layout and design editor: Carolyn Curry
Board Liason: Ed Gracely
President: Manisha Patel
Executive Director: Christiaan Morssink

The UNA-GP is a chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of American (UNA-USA). Our website offers information about our mission and upcoming events, and ways to get involved, including volunteering and becoming a member. Please take a look at our social media accounts and monthly newsletters!

Volunteers with all types of skill sets are welcome to work with the UNA-GP, short or long term. If interested, please contact Manisha Patel, Volunteer Coordinator and President, at mpatel@ma-gp.org

www.facebook.com/UNAGP
www.twitter.com/UNAGP
www.una-gp.org