



United Nations Association of Australia
WA Division

MARCH 2012

UNAAWA Newsletter

President's Report

Its shaping up to be a very exciting year for the Association with many activities and events both underway and being planned. Please refer to our calendar at <http://www.unaa-wa.org.au/calendar.pdf> to check out the latest information and look us up on our new *facebook* page <https://www.facebook.com/UNAAWAInc> . Thank you to Amanda Joseph for setting up this page.

Our next event is the UNAA/UN Youth Australia panel Q&A about 'Australia's bid for a Security Council seat' (and our role as a good global citizen) to be held at 6.30pm – 8.00pm on Tuesday 17 April 2012 at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, UWA. We will have a panel of terrific speakers (see inside) and refreshments will be served. Book soon – adults are \$10 and concessions are \$5. I hope to see you there.

- *Carolyne Gatward*

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Ban calls on Syria to end the crisis

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon today called on Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad to implement a six-point plan put forward recently to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in the country.

“I strongly urge President Assad of Syria to put those commitments into immediate effect. There is no time to waste,” Mr. Ban said at a press briefing in Kuwait City.

The Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Kofi Annan, submitted the plan during his visit to Damascus earlier this month. It seeks to stop the violence and the killing, give access to humanitarian agencies, release detainees, and kick-start an inclusive political dialogue.

The UN estimates that more than 8,000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed and tens of thousands displaced since the uprising – part of the broader Arab Spring movement across North Africa and the Middle East – began in March last year.

Mr. Ban told reporters that he remains deeply concerned about the continuing conflict, and stressed that the upcoming League of Arab States summit in Baghdad, Iraq, will take place at “a crucial time” to discuss the situation in Syria with key stakeholders in the region.

“I am going to meet with key leaders in Baghdad and discuss with them how the United Nations and the League of Arab States can work together in helping Joint Special Envoys in [their] efforts to get these six-point proposals implemented as was pledged by President Assad,” Mr. Ban said.

(UN News Centre — 28 March 2012) 1

Who is Joseph Kony?

In the past weeks, a gripping social media campaign has drawn attention to and raised awareness of the atrocities committed by Ugandan guerrilla group leader Joseph Kony. The campaign, which has been disseminated via Facebook and Twitter, condemns Kony's brutal abduction and recruitment of children as child soldiers and sex slaves for his rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army.

Under Kony's rule, over 30 000 Ugandan children have been abducted. These children are used as combatants, messengers, porters and cooks and for forced sexual services. Some are abducted or forcibly recruited, others are driven to join by poverty, abuse and discrimination, or to seek revenge for violence enacted against them or their families. Children may join armed groups as the only way to guarantee daily food and survival.

Laws against these atrocities were passed in 2002, when the Statute of the International Criminal Court came into force, making the conscription, enlistment or use of children under 15 in hostilities by national armed forces or armed groups a war crime. However, a decade on and we are still confronted with the gruelling reality that some 300 000 children are still involved in conflicts across 30 countries worldwide.

Kony was indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity in 2005 by the International Criminal Court but has evaded capture. This recent poignant campaign prompts us to realize that Kony is only *one* of *hundreds* of evil war criminals. Social media may have thrust Kony's brutal actions to the forefront of the global conscience for the time being, however ongoing persistence, action and awareness from the international community are critical if he and other corrupt war criminals are to be brought to justice.

(Sources: UNICEF Website, Child Soldiers factsheet (2012))

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and human rights"- Article 1 of Declaration of Human Rights

March 21 of every year marks the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is a poignant date that commemorates the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, where dozens of peaceful demonstrators were shot by police in apartheid South Africa for protesting racially discriminatory laws.

Since then, the apartheid system in South Africa has been dismantled. Racist laws and practices have been abolished in many countries, and we have built an international framework for fighting racism, guided by the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

However, racial disparities still exist. The "Let's Fight Racism" campaign launched in late 2011, draws attention to these everyday stereotypes, challenges perceptions, and encourages discussion with the aim of changing behaviour. It facilitates dialogue between all people from different backgrounds.

The campaign is harnessing support and raising awareness through social media such as Twitter (#Fight Racism) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/unitednationshumanrights). The objective of the campaign is to make people reflect on 'what are you doing to fight racism?'. The UN website for the Day is located at www.un.org/en/events/racialdiscriminationday.

(Jessica Watts, UNAAWA Executive member)



World Water Day — 22 March 2012

Today, I write on World Water, a key feature in Millennium Development Goal no.7, and quote from UN 6 March News Bulletin.

“Nearly 9 out of 10 have safe water to drink”

“Some 89% of people across the globe have access to safe drinking water, according to the United Nations, a mark that beats by five years the international target -- contained in Millennium Development Goal No. 7 -- of halving the number of people who do not have access to improved drinking water sources, such as piped supplies and protected wells. More than 2 billion people worldwide gained access to safe drinking water between 1990 and 2010.”

The objective of World Water Day is to focus attention to the impact on urban water systems, of rapid urban population growth, industrialisation, trans-boundary conflicts, natural disasters and the uncertainty of “climate change”.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has now endorsed and enshrined principles for access to portable water for all humans in its Articles. Article 25 principle reads: *“Everyone has the right to a standard of living, adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control”*.

At home, we face issues of droughts and floods which impact on population demographics, agriculture, food production, pollution and substantial increases in the cost of living standards. In the global water picture, the answers lie in the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals overarching framework, to provide clean potable water to a needy developing world. There are solutions, there is water available and it comes down to Governments and NGOs implementing the political will and initiative to address these issues. **Dire poverty needs eradicating now!**

It is questionable, searching for water on the planet Mars when we have urgent needs on Planet Earth. There needs to be a balance of mindset from our scientists and “technical experts” in water sustainability, development and environmental requirements for human consumption. For example, the damming of rivers may remove the viable agricultural footprint and resultant land use. However, otherwise, the lack of water could deter agricultural subsistence or commercial needs and even potable use, creating even a greater loss and displacement of human life third hand. Developing countries rarely have technical water improvement means other than natural surface or aquifer water sources. Desalination is not the answer. Costs, technology and inland locations give rise to almost impossible solutions.

At the other end of the scale, in the west, water production, consumption by recycling and desalination plants, heavily impact on the carbon footprint and energy consumption—triggering opinions that desalination is climate risk free with a guaranteed production of water. The balance needs to take account of social, environmental and human rights first principles. We are a learned society with advancing technology — to arrive at honourable outcomes between underprivileged and developed nations that produce equitable outcomes to improve lives is the equation to model.

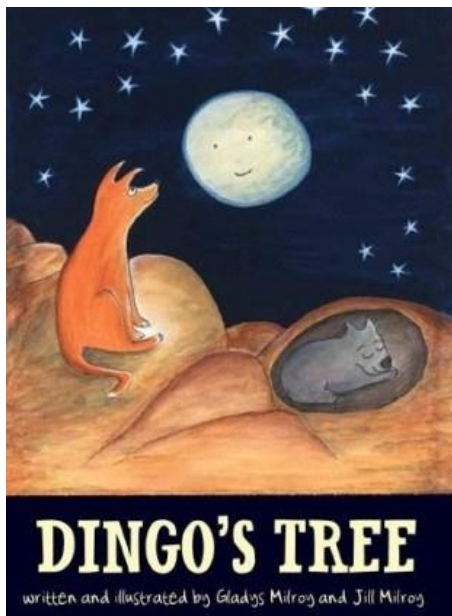
The problem facing our country, Australia, is that droughts and floods are a calendar of Australia’s historical evolutionary pre-federation and post federation colonisation. Our first colony, New South Wales (1788) and Western Australia (1829) experienced dire lack of water. We have 75% of our natural water resources in Northern Australia, which needs to be harnessed for southern consumptive use. We should spare a moment next time we fill our glasses with water from our taps and consider the African mother in Sub-Sahara Africa who walks without footwear, morning and evening, 10 kilometres each day with an urn on her head to gather water for her family, moreover, adds powdered milk formula for her young, to potentially infected water. The thought is indeed soul-searching and we can make the change to uplifting a better way to harness essential water for life’s needs.

I urge you all to contribute with donations to UNICEF for the remarkable work that our United Nations Agency embarks, on such humanitarian needs that are evident, to promote the sanctity and sustainability of life.

JOSEPH A. CARUSO
UNAAWA International Representative

22 March 2012

Book Review — *Dingo's Tree*



This is the story of Dingo, Wombat, Crow and their friends as they struggle to exist alongside the devastation of mining that is destroying their homeland. It is a powerful children's tale that is both touching and hard-hitting.

The book is written by mother and daughter Gladys and Jill Milroy. Gladys Milroy is from the Pilbara region. She was born in 1927 and was taken as a young child and placed in the Parkerville Children's Home. Her people's country is the Palyku country of the eastern Pilbara.

Professor Jill Milroy is also a Palyku woman. She is Dean of Indigenous Studies at UWA. In 2011, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for services to Indigenous education.

Dingos' Tree is available in bookshops and online from Magabala Books (www.magabala.com) for \$19.95. Launched in 1987, Magabala Books is a not-for-profit Aboriginal Corporation based in Broome, that aims to promote, preserve and publish Indigenous Australian culture.

United Nations - Important Dates

March

8th — International Women's Day

21st — International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination

22nd — World Day for Water

25th — International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

April

4th April — International Day for Mine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action

7th April — Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide

7th April — World Health Day [WHO]

22nd April — International Mother Earth Day

25th April — World Malaria Day [WHO]



For more information, visit:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml>

Yolande Frank Memorial Award 2012

A Creative Expression of the Declaration of Human Rights

2012 is the third year of the award in memory of Yolande Frank, a long time member of UNAABA and survivor of the Holocaust who passed away in 2009. Yolande had a passion to ensure that the children of WA should understand the importance the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The inaugural award in 2010 was won by Amanda (aged 11 years) from Rossmoyne Primary School. The 2011 award was won by Si Yu Zhang (aged 11 years), from the Intensive English Centre, Parkwood Primary School.

This year UNAABA calls for creative expressions of Article 26 part 1 of the Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to education, education shall be free, and at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on a basis of merit.



Teacher's education kits are available from UNAABA office, free of charge.

The award is open to children aged between 9 - 14 years as at the closing date of the award, 31 July 2012.

Prize: A cheque for \$200 and book presentation for the artist and a cheque for \$100 to the school library to purchase teaching aids or books focusing on human rights issues.

Photo: Highly Commended, Yolande Frank Memorial Award 2010

Entries may be submitted in the following forms - drawing, painting, collage, screen print, charcoal, water colour or pastels. The winning entry remains the property of UNAABA.

Size: Minimum A4 [21cm x 29.5cm] or maximum 37cm x 70cm.

Entries should be clearly marked with the child's name, age, school and contact details on the back.

Entries are to be posted or delivered to:

United Nations Australia Association WA
Yolande Frank Memorial Committee
St John of God Serviced Offices, 1st Floor Arcadia House
1 Roydhouse Street
SUBIACO WA 6008.

Entries must be received by 3pm Tuesday 31 July 2012.

Enquiries to Judith Parker 95272438; email: judithannparker@bigpond.com.

The award will be announced at the AGM of UNAABA in August. Arrangements will be made with the school of the winning entry to present the award. All children who enter will receive a participation certificate.

The decision of the judges is final. The appointed judges are Diana Warnock, Owen Loneragan and a representative of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia.

Rwanda Exhibition Launch—South Australia

(Photo: speaker at the SA Rwanda Exhibition Launch.)



I had the privilege to represent the United Nations Association of Australia WA in Adelaide for the Human Rights Day. This came as an invitation from the South Australian division (Ms Lidia Moretti) who organized the international Rwanda exhibition launch.

My journey was very worthwhile. While we may not be directly affected by the suffering of others on a global scale, much can be done to prevent some of the hardship.

A message from the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, was read by Julia Dean. The focus was that human rights belong to every one of us without exception.

The message stated ‘That is why, on Human Rights Day, we do more than celebrate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we acknowledge its enduring relevance for our own times’.

As we look to the challenges ahead, let us take inspiration from the example of human rights activists and the timeless power of the Universal Declaration, and do our utmost to uphold the ideals and aspirations that speak for every culture and every person.

(Nkandu Beltz, UNAAWA Executive member)

(Photo: Nkandu Beltz (centre) with some attendees at the SA Rwanda Exhibition Launch.)



UNAAWA Human Rights Committee

Most Human Rights Committee members present at the February meeting had attended the Human Rights Day breakfast and the Holocaust Commemoration event.

The meeting pledged ongoing support for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and for action on ratification by the Federal Government of the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers.

The Committee noted the approach of Harmony Week and the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Harmony Day in WA) on 21 March.

A forum on the Rights of Persons with Mental Health Issues has been proposed and with the support of the Executive would be planned for a future date. Speakers could be headed by Ted Wilkes (Aboriginal), CARAD or ASeTTS (refugees, migrants) and St Barts (Homelessness). Consideration would also be needed for a suitable venue.

Upon the arrival of Renata Sivacolundhu in March (our member who comes to us from UNDPI), the Committee would like to plan a time to have the exhibit, "Lessons from Rwanda" in Western Australia. Informal discussion with the WA Council of Churches generated a favourable reaction and could possibly be a source of sponsorship. The suggestion of displaying the exhibit in Refugee Week later in June was considered for planning purposes.

UNAAWA Environment Committee

The UNAAWA Environment Committee would like to thank Paul Elkington for his work as the Convenor to date, and for his ongoing commitment to the Environment Committee as Deputy Chair going forward. The Environment Committee would like to welcome the new Convenor, Amanda Joseph, to the role.

2012 is set to be a busy year for the Environment Committee with a renewed focus on developing partnerships with organisations and other committees. The Environment Committee looks forward to ongoing collaboration with UN affiliated groups including UN Youth, UN Women and UN Young Women. New collaboration is being undertaken through the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia's NGO Industry Environment Forum.

Also on the agenda for 2012 is the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio (Rio +20) marking the 20th anniversary of the landmark 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. The Rio +20 Conference is an opportunity for world leaders, as well as a number of NGOs, private sector participants and other groups to get together to shape how we will tackle poverty reduction, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection.

The two main themes of the conference are how we can build a Green Economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty and how to improve international coordination for sustainable development. The Environment Committee will be participating in these discussions through submissions to the UN Future We Want website.

The World Environment Day theme this year is *Green Economy: Does it include you?*. The focus is on improving human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. This highlights a move towards a low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive world. The Environment Committee is looking to host an event to celebrate this day on 5 June 2012.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the UNAAWA Environment Committee, please send an email to environment@unaa-wa.org.au or contact the UNAAWA office.

April Event — Australia's Security Council seat bid



Q & A PANEL: Australia's Security Council Bid

WHEN Tuesday 17th April, 6:30pm - 8:00pm

WHERE Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, UWA (Carpark 20)

COST \$10 adult, \$5 student/concession (inc refreshments)

SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Michael Sheldrick

PANEL MODERATOR

Campaign Manager,
The End of Polio

Renata Sivacolundhu

Human Rights Information
Officer, UN Department of
Public Information

Michael Wood

Director of WA State
Office, Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade



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International Women's Day – Breakfast 9 March 2012

On Friday 9 March 2012, over 1000 women joined together to celebrate International Women's Day with a breakfast at the Perth Convention Centre. The event was supported by the Australian Government & AusAID, several national business partners & many local women's groups who are making a significant difference with their involvement to empower women from diverse cultures.

One of the highlights was to see so many school girls at the event, whom I feel would take away strong feelings of the need to empower women from cultures so different from ours but, with our support can make a difference to change customs that to date have not made their lives easy.

Babs McHugh maintained an entertaining commentary throughout the morning, chairing the proceedings as we received very eloquent & moving speeches from Professor Colleen Hayward, Donelle Wheeler & the Hon Robyn McSweeney MLC. Tendra entertained us with a wonderful harmony of stories & a year 11 student introduced a powerful video about Improving Markets.

Our morning culminated with Sally Sara, who most of us are more familiar watching her on our nightly news with the backdrop of Afghanistan war zones.

Sally is an award winning journalist who has reported from more than 30 countries including Iraq, Lebanon and Sierra Leone. Sally has spent the past year covering the news from the frontline of the war in Afghanistan. During her career, she has broken the glass ceiling, as the first female correspondent appointed to the ABC's Africa, South Asia and Kabul bureaus.

She was able to portray her experiences with compassion balanced with a touch of humour as to how her mother copes with her daughter's life as a war correspondent. Sally closed telling us that she will soon be reporting from rural Australia where I imagine we will all feel she is a little safer.



(Photo: Neesha Seth, Carolyn Gatward, Elsie Tester, Judith Parker)

These gatherings remind us of the many people who are making a significant contribution to lift oppression & bring dignity to many women around the world & with our support we can help to increase these achievements.

(Ailsa Allen, UNAAWA member)

UNAA National Conference 2012 - Brisbane

Day 1. Wednesday 22 August: Round table sessions (six – eight). Topics will be drawn from the following: Academic Network, Climate Change, Constitution/referendum, Disarmament, Global Compact, Governance, Human Rights, the Pacific, Parliamentary Group, Peace & Security, Responsibility to Protect, Status of Women, WHO, HIV/AIDS Women -Violence & Trafficking, Women - Empowerment.

Day 2 & 3 Thursday 23 – Friday 24 August

UNAA National Conference “The Future is in Your Hands”: Focusing on: Peace & Security, Sustainable Development, Human Rights and Life after Rio+20.

Further Resources

- **The United Nations Information Centre for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific:** <http://www.un.org.au>
- **The United Nations Youth Association Australia (UNYA) WA Division:** <http://wa.unya.org.au/>
- **For international updates, sign up for UN Wire:** http://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp
- **Read more about the Millennium project at:** www.unmillenniumproject.org