



United Nations Association of Australia  
WA Division

AUGUST 2012

# UNAANA Newsletter

## President's Report

Our WA delegation (five members) has recently returned from the hectic UNAA National Conference in Brisbane. Professor Russell Trood was elected as the UNAA President. Congratulations to our Immediate Past President, Dame Judith Parker AM DSJ who was awarded the **2012 UNAA Peace Award**. Full details about these matters to follow in our September edition.

I am pleased to advise that our WA resolution seeking UNAA to urge the Australian Government to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families was successfully passed at the National Council meeting on 25 August. Another outcome is that I have been appointed to a UNAA committee to help develop the national advocacy/policy strategy.

Thank you to everyone who attended our (packed!) AGM on 12 August. Also, many thanks to our previous Executive for their excellent work during the last financial year. I look forward to building on our achievements with the new team in 2012/13. We are currently **seeking a Treasurer**—if you are interested, please ring or email the Office (ph: 6380 7304; email [office@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:office@unaa-wa.org.au)).

UNAANA will be participating in a UN International Peace Day event at the Peace Grove near Gloucester Park on 21 September at 10am—please see inside for flier details.

Exciting news is that Professor Gillian Triggs of the Australian Human Rights Commission and Ms Carina Hoang, Special Representative from Australia for UNHCR, have agreed to speak at our UN Day event from 5-7pm on **Wednesday 24 October** at the Constitution Centre. Details to follow shortly so save the date!

The UNAA Young Professionals Conference will be held in Sydney from 26-27 October and a WA delegate will be attending.

Please see the item about the Members Survey (page 2) and provide us with your feedback about your expectations and hopes for our Association. We will be using this information to keep our Association flourishing and vibrant.

- *Carolyn Gatward*

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## Welcome to the UNAAWA Executive 2012/13

In August, the UNAAWA held its Annual General Meeting. We warmly congratulate the newly elected 2012/13 Executive team and thank our ongoing Executive members and departing members for their hard work and dedication during the last financial year.

**President:** Carolyne Gatward

**Vice-President representing ordinary members:** Neesha Seth

**Vice-President representing organisational members:** Julia Crandell

**Secretary:** Renata Sivacolundhu

**Treasurer:** Carl Logan

**Immediate Past President:** Judith Parker AM DSJ

### **Delegates representing organisational members**

Margaret Chiramba

Radhanika De Mel

Owen Loneragan

Ester Steingiesser

### **Ordinary members**

Joseph Caruso (Global Representative, UNAAWA)

Harvey Davies

Amanda Joseph

Tony McCrae

Dr Jan Ryan

Jessica Watts

## Members Survey

### **SO, TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK!!**

Over the last 12 months, the membership of UNAAWA has significantly increased. Consequently, we have many new members in our organisation and are conscious of the need to adapt our work and activities in response to the needs and interests of both new and older members.

To assist us in fulfilling your expectations of membership of the UNAAWA, we would be most grateful if you could provide us with your feedback via our (very) brief Membership Survey at: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/QH57FFD](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QH57FFD) or, for members without email, via the enclosed survey.

### **WIN MARGARET RIVER CHOCOLATES OR A DOUBLE PASS TO THE MOVIES!!!**

If you complete the survey **before 30 September 2012** you can enter the draw to win Margaret River chocolates or a double pass to the movies.

The survey is completely anonymous therefore if you are doing the electronic survey and wish to enter the draw, then please send an email to [office@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:office@unaa-wa.org.au) after completing the survey, with the words SURVEY COMPLETED - PRIZE DRAW in the Subject Heading. Thank you and good luck!!



# UN International Peace Day

Organised by Brahma Kumaris Australia and NCJWA (WA),

With the participation of UNAABA

Friday 21st September 2012 at 10am

## Visit to the Peace Grove

The memorial was erected in memory of President Anwar el Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel - both Nobel Peace Prize winners - and both assassinated because of their courageous efforts for peace.



10:30am Opening Address - Judith A. Parker AM DSJ

**Arden St, East Perth Park – back of Gloucester Park**

RSVP - Enquiries

UNAABA office (10am to 3 pm weekdays) 6380 7304 [office@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:office@unaa-wa.org.au)  
NCJWA office (9am to 1 pm Mon & Thurs) 9276 8040 [wa@ncjwa.org.au](mailto:wa@ncjwa.org.au)

## UNAA National Conference 2012

The UNAA National Conference was held in Brisbane this year & was well represented by all States & Territories in Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Papua New Guinea. With the theme of “*The Future is in our Hands*”, the conference commenced with four ‘roundtable’ workshops addressing the issues raised in relation to the UNAA Status of Women Network; Global Systems for Sustainability; Human Rights and Climate Change & Sustainable Development. Recommendations from these roundtable sessions went forward to the conference for further comment & it is anticipated that when finalised they will be forwarded to UNAA, the Australian Government & WFUNA. These interactive and productive sessions were followed in the evening with a Lord Mayor’s Reception and the presentation of the UNAA Queensland Community Awards.

Day 2 began with a breakfast at Parliament House where we were entertained by a wonderful group of women from WILPF with a very moving song & dance presentation “Listen to the Music of the Human Heart”. The conference then began with Welcome to Country, the welcome to delegates & the presentation of the UNAA Awards. The awards were presented to Dame Judith Parker, Harold Wilkinson, John Langmore & the Hon Robert Hill by the Queensland Governor Penelope Wensley, Patron of UNAA Qld.

Over the next two days we were given some wonderful presentations exploring the UN Charter; Peace & Security; Pacific Development; Women’s Security and Equality; Human Rights; Climate Change; UN Security Council; Health; Sustainable Development and Life after Rio+20. A UN Youth panel closed the Thursday afternoon with very passionate dissertations and enthusiasm, reinforcing their support to uphold the values of the UN and showing how social networking has a significant place. Although most UN Youth do not transfer to UNAA branches, a UN Young Professionals has now been established in NSW with resounding support & it is hoped that this initiative will shortly be expanded across all of Australia.

Final farewells were exchanged with a formal dinner chaired by one of our vibrant UN Youth who arranged interactive participation between the tables, each of which were representing different countries. There was great humour & fun as Rhiannon highlighted the lack of ‘extras’ on the tables of the poor countries and the more affluent countries being encouraged to share their delicacies.

Our thanks go to Queensland for the opportunity to discuss so many global issues. The message also came through for the need to increase our membership to raise the profile and to promote the UN values.

*[Ailsa Allen, UNAAWA member]*

*[Photo: Neesha Seth, Judith Parker, Queensland President Virginia Balmain,  
Curtis Clark, Ailsa Allen & Carolyn Gatward]*





It's been a jam-packed first couple months of the UN Youth year! We had our AGM on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, where we elected the new executive for 2012-13, and a week later 13 of our members headed to Melbourne for the July National Council. We came back from National Council excited and full of ideas for the year ahead (and with bad colds), and then held our Strategic Planning meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July where we discussed how to put these ideas into action. From there we jumped straight into things and we've already had a week-long visit from the Australian Youth Representative to the UN, and held a Q&A speakers' panel for World Humanitarian Day. The Youth Representative to the UN is a position jointly chosen by UN Youth Australia and by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

This year's Youth Rep, Dan Ryan, was selected from 300 applicants to represent the views of Australian Youth at the UN. Perth was the last stop on his 'listening tour', where he met with young people around the country before he heads to the UN Headquarters, New York in September. He visited 10 schools in WA (including Bunbury SHS and Busselton SHS), ran a workshop for university students at UWA, and visited various youth groups and initiatives.



*(Photo: Dan Ryan, centre, with UN Youth volunteers)*

On a broader note, the 12<sup>th</sup> of August was International Youth Day. The theme of International Youth Day 2012 was "Building a Better World: Partnering with Youth" — a global call to action to develop and engage in partnerships with and for youth. This tied in nicely with Dan's visit to Perth, where he engaged directly with hundreds of young people and discussed with them not only the issues they faced in their communities but solutions to these issues.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of August we held a Q&A forum to celebrate World Humanitarian Day. UN Youth WA co-hosted the event with UNAA, which also provided us with funding through AusAID. We had five expert panellists including Michael Wood, the WA State Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Michael Sheldrick, the Campaigns Manager of the Global Poverty Project. There was some really interesting and interactive discussion, and we received great feedback from all the participants! We donated all the money raised from ticket sales to a project in Ethiopia which does some terrific work protecting reproductive health and rights of rural young women.

*[Julia Crandell, UN Youth WA President]*

*(Photo: Panel members, World Humanitarian Day)*



## International Day—Remembrance of Slave Trade & its Abolition

The UN International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition [UNESCO] is annually observed on August 23 to remind people of the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade. This abominable form of human enslavement commenced in the fifteenth century when expanding European empires lacked one major resource – a workforce.

Deemed as hard workers and resilient to tough climatic conditions, millions of African men, women and children were exported to the Americas over a 400 year period. They were a link in the infamous ‘triangular trade’ that was completed by America sending plantation crops to Europe and Europe sending manufactured goods to Africa. Slaves became property, were treated sordidly and were stripped of every human right. Most suffered mercilessly at the hands of their captors and worked ceaselessly until they were either killed, or died from the inhumane conditions in which they existed.

This day gives us a chance to reflect on the historic causes, the methods and the consequences of slave trade. It is important to remember that while this day marks the end of the ancient slave trade; modern day slavery still exists across the globe today. If you want to join the fight to end this evil, check out the UN’s Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (<http://www.ungift.org/>) or support initiatives like [www.walkfree.org/](http://www.walkfree.org/).

*[Jessica Watts, UNAAWA Executive member]*

References cited:

<http://www.google.com.au/imgres>;

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/international-day-remembrance-of-slave-trade-and-its-abolition>;

<http://www.un.org.au/International-Day-for-the-Abolition-of-Slavery-news133.aspx>.

## United Nations - Important Dates

### August

**9th — International Day of World’s Indigenous People**

**12th – International Youth Day**

**19th —World Humanitarian Day**

**23rd—International Day for Remembrance of Slave Trade & its Abolition [UNESCO]**

**29th - International Day against Nuclear Tests**

**30th– International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances**

### September

**8th– International Literacy Day [UNESCO]**

**10th-World Suicide Prevention Day [WHO]**

**21st-International Day of Peace**

**27th-World Tourism Day [UNWTO]**

**28th-World Rabies Day [WHO]**

**29th-World Heart Day [WHO]**

For more information, visit: <http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/days.shtml>

## Member Profile – Renata Sivacolundhu

Working for the United Nations for the last eight years has provided Renata Sivacolundhu, UNAAWA's newly appointed Secretary, with an insider's view of life within the Organisation.

After joining the UN's Department of Public Information in early 2004, Renata was appointed the focal point for women's issues and sustainable development. One of her first challenges was overseeing all media and public information pertaining to the international women's rights conference - Beijing +10 - which was to assess implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

"For two weeks, the normally staid, quiet corridors of the UN were filled with energetic, passionate women from all over the world. They were all there to exchange ideas and experiences, to change things for the better and advance the cause of women's rights. It was a wonderful, positive learning experience," says Renata.

As focal point for Human Rights, Indigenous Issues and Rule of Law since 2006, Renata managed strategic communications and media outreach for major UN milestones including the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the inception of the UN Human Rights Council, the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Durban Review Conference on Racism and Xenophobia, as well as regular meetings of UN treaty bodies and human rights Special Rapporteurs.

The adoption in 2007 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was a landmark achievement for indigenous peoples worldwide. As a public information officer, it was Renata's role to provide the media with updates as to the status of the negotiations and to explain in clear, non-legal language the importance of the Declaration for indigenous peoples.

"The Declaration does not create new rights for indigenous peoples, but rather informs how other international human rights obligations, which countries like Australia have agreed to be bound by, apply to indigenous peoples."

"As an Australian, this issue was close to my heart and something I am very passionate about. The celebrations of the indigenous people on the day it was adopted were something truly memorable for me."

Another highlight of Renata's human rights portfolio was her work with the Special Rapporteurs, independent experts tasked with monitoring and investigating human rights violations worldwide.



"The Special Rapporteurs shine a spotlight on human rights abuses around the world and promoting their findings is vitally important. Their independence from Member States sets them apart and gives them a great deal of credibility. My job was to leverage that credibility to get the attention they deserved from the media and the general public."

Renata also managed the UN's Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the UN, a global education and outreach programme which aims to teach the lessons of the Rwanda genocide to help prevent future genocides. Through online, audiovisual, print and exhibit materials in a range of languages, the Programme also aims to raise awareness of the issues still faced by survivors of the genocide today.

Working with genocide survivors and perpetrators was a humbling experience. “I met one man who saved the lives of many others during the genocide. I will never forget how this brave man thanked me for telling their stories to the world so that people would learn from their experience, saying that ‘your work takes great courage’. This, from a man who had risked his life several times over! I said that it was the very least we could do.”

Before joining the United Nations, Renata worked in media and communications roles for non-profit organisations, the NSW government and the left-wing think tank The Australia Institute.

Renata received her Masters in International Law from the Australian National University and holds a Bachelor degree in Commerce-Marketing from the University of New South Wales.

Since moving to Perth earlier this year and while on leave from her job at the UN, Renata currently works at the Australian Red Cross as a humanitarian observer in Australia's immigration detention centres, monitoring conditions of detention and advocating to the government around issues of humanitarian concern.

“I am so pleased to be able to contribute to the great work that UNAAWA does in promoting the work and values of the United Nations at the local level”.



## UNITED NATIONS GREEN CLIMATE FUND

A United Nations fund aimed at mobilizing resources to help developing countries mitigate the impact of global warming has kicked-off its first official meeting. Established by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) during the 2011 UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, the Green Climate Fund ([GCF](#)) was created to help developing nations protect themselves from climate impacts and build their own sustainable futures. However, the GCF could not meet officially until it had filled all 24 seats on its Board, which effectively governs and supervises all aspects of the Fund.

The GCF will now set about satisfying its mandate, which includes providing developing countries with simplified and improved access to climate change funding, as well as providing them support to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Board inaugurated its first gathering by electing Mr Zaheer Fakir of South Africa and **Mr Ewen McDonald of Australia** as its Co-Chairs for a one-year term. Mr Fakir is the Head of International Relations and Governance of the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, while Mr McDonald is the Deputy Director General of the Australian Agency for International Development, and both boast numerous years of experience in development and climate change-related issues.

Meanwhile, six countries – Germany, Mexico, Namibia, Poland, Republic of Korea, and Switzerland – are vying to host the Fund.

- *UN News Centre, 23 August 2012*

### Further Resources

- **United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific:** <http://www.un.org.au>
- **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](http://www.smartbrief.com/un_wire/index.jsp)
- **For national updates, sign up for the UNAA newsletter UNity:** <http://www.unaa.org.au/subscribe.html>