



**United Nations Association of Australia WA Division**

# UN Matters

**March 2015**

## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

**Carolyn Gatward**

Join us for the launch of the UNAAWA Women's Committee on **Thursday 16 April** (details pgs 6-7). There will be three guest presenters: the Lord Mayor of the City of Perth, Ms Lisa Scaffidi, the International Past President of Soroptimists International, Ms Margaret Lobo AM and UN Women Australia's National President, Ms Elizabeth Shaw. They will be discussing women's rights and equality issues. Presentations will be followed by drinks and refreshments. It is recommended that you book in for this event as it is likely to sell out. See [www.trybooking.com/129300](http://www.trybooking.com/129300). If you cannot make it, but want to be involved with the Women's Committee, please email Kristy Tyrie at [womens.committee@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:womens.committee@unaa-wa.org.au).

This edition includes an article (pg 5) about the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, finding that some of Australia's asylum seeker policies are breaching the UN Convention against Torture. Our Prime Minister has been dismissive of the UN's report. Our national Executive Director, Matthew Kronborg, has observed that the UN Special Rapporteur was simply providing Australia with a brief performance review against goals and it is up to Australia about how they respond. Essentially, we need to listen to expert feedback and aspire to achieve a strong human rights record. Matthew's article in the Sydney Morning Herald on this issue can be viewed [here](#).

2015 is shaping up to be a critical year with the Paris Climate Conference in December offering a special opportunity for countries to agree on a binding global climate agreement. We are planning a significant event in June on climate change. Details to be announced soon.

We have been delighted by the enthusiastic response to our volunteer positions. The applications for the volunteer Environment Officer position closes on 30 April 2015. See the [Position Description](#) for details. More positions will be advertised over the coming months so if you are interested in working with us, please check our website under "Get Involved" or contact the office about how you would like to help.



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## WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE



On February 20, members of the UNAAWA and Graduate Women of WA came together to celebrate the World Day of Social Justice. This annual observance is aimed at highlighting the importance of social justice in the eradication of poverty.

Speaking at the event in Perth, UNAA President Russell Trood

noted that the World Day of Social Justice focuses our mind to remind us we are all the occupants of the same planet; we are therefore obligated to remove discrimination (in relation to gender, age, class, ethnicity etc.) and remove barriers to a wider distribution of wealth and income. ‘Is it idealistic? Is it too hard?’ he asked, providing the following answer, ‘You have to be idealistic to commit to the values the UN hold dear.’

The second speaker for the evening was Associate Professor Jaya Earnest. Dr Earnest is a Life Member of Rwanda Association of University Women (RAUW), Member of Graduate Women Western Australia (WA), UN Women Australia, and 100 Women Perth, Board Member of the Public Health Association of Australia and Ishar (a Multicultural Women’s Health Organisation in WA).

Dr Earnest spoke about her important journey to talk about migrant women in Australia. Her presentation on migrant women in Perth showed us the positive potential of effective social justice. Dr Earnest presented case studies of migrant women’s success in Australia, and provided examples of women who make a difference to the communities they belong to, their work places and who also empower other migrant women. The examples represented government, academia, private sector, community, and not-for-profit sectors.

[Colleen Harmer, Executive Member]

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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY BREAKFAST

I was delighted to join the UN Women for their annual International Women’s Day Breakfast on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015. It was a great morning featuring speakers that left many of us pondering about gender equality and what we can do to support it as individuals.

The morning featured a poignant panel conversation by Mele Maualaivao, Country Programme Coordinator for UN Women in Samoa, Carmen Lawrence, Professorial Fellow at the University of Western Australia and Yassmin Abdel- Mageid, Founder of Youth Without Borders. Many of the points raised by the panellists remind us that gender inequality is not something that only developing countries experience, but that it is an issue that requires ongoing support and public discussion right here in our own workplaces, homes and public spaces in Perth.

UN Women is the United Nations entity responsible for promoting women’s empowerment and gender equality.

[Maija Ala-Kauhaluoma]

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## FACING FACTS IN INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE—AN INTERVIEW WITH KATHERINE ILIOPOULOS

*‘I made the metaphorical leap from relative safety, security, opportunity and democracy – denied to the people of Palestine – into a brand new world, driven by a conviction that even a small voice in the face of uproarious injustice can be heard’*



L-R) Lawyers of the defence Francois Roux, Alia Aoun, Heleyn Unac and Katherine Iliopoulos take part in a special session of the UN-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon at a court room in Leidschendam on November 11, 2011.

Growing up in Victoria, Katherine dreamed of becoming an Astronaut, ‘I guess it reflects my sense of adventure’ she said. While she is yet to reach the moon, her career in human rights law has certainly involved travel, including to the Middle East, Europe and Central Australia.

Katherine started pro bono as a Legal Assistant for Aboriginal legal aid which took her to Yuendumu, a remote Aboriginal community north of Alice Springs. She found application of the justice system in such an environment challenging, ‘People were charged with multiple driving offences, often impacted by their circumstances including the lack of transport options. This landed one man in prison for five years, a disproportionate punishment for the crime.’

As the child of a parent with a debilitating disability, Katherine quickly learned that life can be unfair. She felt motivated to pursue a career that mattered, and provided help to those most vulnerable. Katherine recalls watching coverage of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), a United Nations court of law. ‘I witnessed images of the atrocities that took place during the Balkan conflicts and watched the prosecutors do their work. It felt good to see people taking action to do something’ she said.

The precedent setting tribunal gave a voice to victims and enabled individuals suspected of crimes against humanity to face justice. It certainly made an impression on Katherine, as some years later she was appointed Legal Assistant to the ICTY Defence Counsel. Her role was to analyse evidence and support a fair trial for those accused of war crimes. ‘It’s different to applying domestic law. It’s accepted that the crime has occurred. The focus is instead on proving who was responsible and their level of involvement,’ she said.

Ensuring the right to a fair trial can be difficult, particularly when the accused are absent as she discovered as the Associate Legal Officer to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL). The STL was established following a terrorist attack in Beirut, which killed 22 people, including the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. ‘As a defence counsel, if you can’t directly get your client’s perspective you can only rely on documentation and limited defence investigations,’ says Katherine.

Often those documents can be difficult to read, ‘Statements from witnesses can be harrowing and stories stay with you,’ she says.

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Katherine recalled an account from a truck driver who witnessed a child, emerging from a mass grave of Bosnian men, at risk of being shot. 'I try not to become emotionally involved in the cases. Everyone has a role to play and you need faith in international justice and the rule of law.'

But international justice can be expensive and slow. The ICTY trial she worked on took over 5 years, and the STL continues, 10 years on. 'The volume of evidence can be overwhelming...and it can be challenging to operate amidst different languages, cultures, and ways of working,' she says.

And not everyone agrees on the value of international tribunals. Katherine indicates the people of Lebanon are divided, 'Some are committed to sending a message. Others believe it's a process the country can't afford, particularly now given the threat of ISIS and Syrian refugee crisis.'

Prior to her work with the STL, Katherine coordinated a tripartite project concerned with the torture of Palestinians in Israeli prisons. Based with the Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights in Gaza

City, she witnessed firsthand the ongoing fight against injustice and violence. She remembers the first time she crossed the heavily fortified border, 'I made the metaphorical leap from relative safety, security, opportunity and democracy – denied to the people of Palestine – into a brand new world, driven by a conviction that even a small voice in the face of uproarious injustice can be heard.'

Katherine believes it's important to address underlying issues such as inequality and poverty to prevent conflict in the first place, 'Atrocity is often the end result of a long line of issues that have not been appropriately addressed or intervened upon.'

[Melanie Chatfield]

**Further information**

<http://www.icty.org/>

<http://www.stl-tsl.org>

<http://www.mezan.org/en/>

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## WHAT IS THE UN'S 'HEFORSHE' CAMPAIGN?



International Women's Day has come and gone for another year. But if, like me, you were suffering from a bad case of Living-Under-Rock syndrome and didn't realise that this annual event is a celebration of the ongoing fight for the political, economic and social equality of women, then you are forgiven.

But not after this year. That's because UN Women has made sure that this crucial issue has finally received the global recognition it deserves with its wildly successful HeForShe campaign, spearheaded by its Goodwill Ambassador, actress Emma Watson.

HeForShe actively encourages men and boys to take a stand against discrimination, sexism and violence against the women in their lives. By including men and boys as the movement's vital element, the campaign seeks to redefine the common 'anti-male' perception of feminism, calling instead for solidarity between the sexes.

A first of its kind for the UN, HeForShe was kicked off on 20 September 2014, at the UN headquarters in New York with Watson giving an impassioned speech on how both sexes are imprisoned by gender stereotypes.

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Instead of simply focusing on the plight of women, she empathised with the inequalities also experienced by men such as the stigma associated with mental health, the perception of sensitivity as weakness and how a father's value is considered less than a mother's.

At its core, HeForShe is a call-to-arms for both men and women to free themselves from stigmatised and stereotyped gender roles through cultural and social acknowledgement of gender equality, and the important role that men and boys play in implementing this change. As best expressed by Watson:

Both men and women should feel free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong. It is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum, instead of two

sets of opposing ideals. If we stop defining each other by what we are not, and start defining ourselves by who we are, we can all be freer, and this is what HeForShe is about. It's about freedom.

From students in Jaipur, India, to the President of Malawi and even US President Obama and the First Lady, HeForShe's message has resonated across the globe with almost 263,000 men worldwide, including over 11,000 from Australia, pledging to stand up against violence and prejudice against women.

For more information about the campaign and to pledge your support, head to [www.heforshe.org](http://www.heforshe.org) or find them on Facebook and Twitter.

[Susan Manwaring]

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## AUSTRALIA IS VIOLATING THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE: UN

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, has found aspects of Australia's asylum-seeker policies have breached the United Nations Convention Against Torture (CAT).

The UN Human Rights Council received a report by Mr Mendez on 6 March 2015 finding that the Abbott government had failed to adequately address concerns raised under the CAT about four specific incidents. Australia is bidding for a seat on the 47-member Council, which holds sessions three times a year, in March, June, and September.

Among the findings of Mr Mendez was that the failure to provide adequate detention conditions, end the practice of detention of children and put a stop to the escalating violence and tension on Manus Island violated the right of the asylum seekers, including children, to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Mr Mendez also found that recent changes to the Maritime Powers Act violate the CAT because they allow for arbitrary detention and refugee determination at sea, without access to lawyers.

As a result of the government's failure to 'sufficiently' answer questions, Mr Mendez concludes in his report that 'the government fails to fully and expeditiously cooperate' with the Human Rights Council's mandate.

The report was met with disdain by the Australian government, with the Prime Minister quoted as saying that Australians are 'sick of being lectured to by the United Nations'.

This latest report follows the findings of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein, who said last September that offshore processing and the turn-back-the-boats policy had led to 'a chain of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention and possible torture'.

Australia remains the only developed nation without a constitutional or legislative Bill of Rights at the national level. There is no constitutional prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the CAT has only been partially adopted into federal law.

[Katherine Iliopoulos]



# YOU ARE INVITED TO THE LAUNCH OF THE UNAAWA WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

We are pleased to announce the launch of the United Nations Association Australia Western Australia Women's Committee.

Join us to hear from our three guest presenters speak about women's rights and equality issues in Australia and around the world.

This discussion will be followed by networking drinks and refreshments.

**WHEN:** Thursday 16th April 2015

**TIME:** 5:30pm – 7:30pm

**VENUE:** Constitutional Centre of Western Australia, 40 Havelock St, West Perth

**COST:** \$10 for UNAAWA Members and Concession; \$15 for General Entry

**TICKETS:** Book now to secure your place as numbers are limited. Door sales available if not sold out prior.

[www.trybooking.com/129300](http://www.trybooking.com/129300)

If you are unable to attend but wish to receive updates from UNAAWA Women's Committee, join our mailing list [here](#).



UN Photo/Bikem Ekberzade

The Women's Committee will focus around UN campaigns, issues and programs on women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We aim to create a platform for discussion, organise events and expand the understanding of gender equality throughout Western Australia.



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WA Division**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**WEB:** [www.unaa-wa.org.au/](http://www.unaa-wa.org.au/)

**E:** [womens.committee@unaa-wa.org.au](mailto:womens.committee@unaa-wa.org.au)

**P:** 0423 515 557

## > UNAAWA WOMEN'S COMMITTEE LAUNCH SPEAKERS

### > THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR MS LISA SCAFFIDI LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF PERTH

Ms Scaffidi is the first woman elected as Lord Mayor of Perth and has served since October 2007. Lisa is also a serving Board Member on many local NFP Boards and Committees in areas from community building / infrastructure through to public art, annual events and festivals and is Chair of the Lord Mayor's Distress Relief Fund. Lisa was honoured to be first runner up and the only woman finalist in the 2012 World Mayor Award out of hundreds of Mayors globally.



### > MS. MARGARET LOBO AM INTERNATIONAL PAST PRESIDENT OF SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Margaret was International President from 2007–2009 of Soroptimist International, a global movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls. In March 2010, Margaret was awarded the Women in Leadership Award on International Women's Day from the Ethnic Community Council of WA and was honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours and made a Member of the Order of Australia in the General Division for promoting the Status and Health of Women.



### > MS. ELIZABETH SHAW UN WOMEN AUSTRALIA NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Elizabeth's involvement in gender and development issues began when she was appointed the 2008 Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations. She worked on gender issues during her time with the Australian Mission in New York during the 63rd General Assembly. In 2009, she established Young UN Women Australia in Perth and in 2010 was elected to the Board of the Australian National Committee for UN Women. Elizabeth also serves as a manager in KPMG's advisory practice and as a Director of Inclusion WA.



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
WEB: [www.unaa-wa.org.au/](http://www.unaa-wa.org.au/)  
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P: 0423 515 557

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## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: MILESTONES



Sustainable Development Goals are the proposed new set of global development goals, which follow on from the Millennium Development Goals. 17 new goals are presented and debated among government leaders throughout the year in various conferences, negotiations and special meetings. The aim is to agree on a new global development agenda by the end of September 2015.

This article series follows the development of the SDGs each month, presenting important milestones, various viewpoints and analysing the debate.

### **Defining the Declaration: 17-20 February 2015 .**

The post 2015 negotiating session held from 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York focused on the Declaration component of the new development agenda. The Declaration 'will be an important part of the future framework and indeed of the outcome document' of the post 2015 agenda, said Co-Facilitator David Donoghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland.

There was wide agreement that the Declaration should be concise, visionary, ambitious, actionable, communicable and simple. Many delegations also stressed that it should lay out a collective vision and clearly argue why we need the new development agenda. Furthermore, a number of delegations underlined that poverty eradication should be highlighted as an overarching objective and sustainable development as the way forward.

### **The Copenhagen Consensus: Only Smart Goals Will Work**

On his recent visit to Perth, Bjorn Lomborg from the Copenhagen Consensus Center gave a public lecture titled 'The Smartest Goals for the World 2016-2030'. The lecture was based on the Post - 2015 Consensus, which is an international think-tank that has brought together experts from the UN, NGO and private sectors to produce 100+ research papers to establish the most effective targets for the post-2015 development agenda.

The Copenhagen Consensus argues that Sustainable Development Goals must be based on 'smart goals', which are a narrow set of goals that will bring about the most benefit with the money and resources available. A central focus on the Copenhagen Consensus' research is a cost-benefit analysis, which argues that by prioritising fewer goals with scientifically proven benefits is a much better way to achieve global development, compared to a large set of long and complicated goals that make us 'feel good.'

More on Copenhagen Consensus approach and arguments on the SDGs, see <http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/post-2015-consensus>

More on the development of SDG negotiations, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

[Maija Ala-Kauhaluoma]



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## NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

### UN Emergency Work - Cyclone Pam

Help support the people of Vanuatu to rebuild and recover from the recent devastating cyclone. For more details on how to support the UN's work in Vanuatu, see the [UN Women's Emergency Appeal for Vanuatu](#) or the [UNICEF Cyclone Pam Vanuatu Appeal](#).

### Oxfam Comedy Gala 2015 for Vanuatu

A comedy fundraiser with a lineup of acclaimed comedians. A great night with laughs guaranteed. All proceeds go towards Oxfam's Vanuatu Cyclone Pam Appeal. Show is from 8pm–10pm, Saturday April 18 at the Charles Hotel, North Perth. Food & drink available.

Tickets and more info at: <http://www.trybooking.com/HFXC>.

### Red Cross - "Humanitarians on the Frontline: A Close Encounter with Ebola"

You are invited to this International Humanitarian Law event with Anne Carey. Anne is a WA nurse who has been on three missions to Sierra Leone as part of the Red Cross Movement's response to the Ebola crisis. Anne's story is incredibly inspirational and it is sure to be a very interesting and eye-opening evening.

*When:* Thursday 7 May, 6:00-7:30pm

*Where:* Level 30, QV1 Building, 250 St Georges Terrace Perth WA

*Bookings:* The event is free but RSVPs are essential via Trybooking at <http://www.trybooking.com/129502>

### Amnesty's Meaningful Movie Night

Amnesty invites you to the screening of the award-winning 'Charlie's Country', directed by Rolf de Heer and starring David Gulpilil. Set in Arnhem Land, the movie deals with Australia's treatment of Indigenous people, including the effects of the Northern Territory intervention on remote communities, the clash between the old traditions and the new, and the difficulty in trying to maintain a connection to the land and customs. Entry is by gold coin donation and light refreshments will be provided. To assist us with our planning please RSVP to [mtlawleyamnesty@gmail.com](mailto:mtlawleyamnesty@gmail.com) by 24 April.

*When:* Thursday April 30 2015 at 6:30pm

*Where:* Church of Christ, 68 Waverley Street, Dianella, WA

*Contact:* Leonie Stewart - [mtlawleyamnesty@gmail.com](mailto:mtlawleyamnesty@gmail.com)



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Australia WA Inc

**TWITTER:** @UNAAWA



## UN OBSERVANCES

### APRIL 2015

2 APRIL	<a href="#">World Autism Awareness Day</a>
4 APRIL	<a href="#">International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action</a>
6 APRIL	<a href="#">International Day of Sport for Development and Peace</a>
7 APRIL	<a href="#">Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide</a>
7 APRIL	<a href="#">World Health Day [WHO]</a>
12 APRIL	<a href="#">International Day of Human Space Flight</a>
22 APRIL	<a href="#">International Mother Earth Day</a>
23 APRIL	<a href="#">World Book and Copyright Day (Resolution 3.18 of the 28th session of the UNESCO General Conference)</a>
23 APRIL	<a href="#">English Language Day</a>
25 APRIL	<a href="#">World Malaria Day [WHO]</a>
26 APRIL	<a href="#">World Intellectual Property Day [WIPO]</a>
28 APRIL	<a href="#">World Day for Safety and Health at Work</a>
29 APRIL	<a href="#">Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare</a>
30 APRIL	<a href="#">International Jazz Day</a>