



United
Nations
Association
of Australia
WA Division

UN Matters

May June 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As 2017 reaches its midpoint, developments continue to risk the quality of life and security of societies around the world. Whether it's terror incidents, warfare, extreme weather events or policies which undermine decades of sustainable progress, events can certainly be scary and concerning. However, it's precisely in times like these that we need to stand up and be counted amongst those who are committed to make a positive contribution. To live the values of the UN as captured in its Charter, namely peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity.

It may be daunting to consider the plethora of global hardships, add these to the challenges of daily life, and then commit to making a difference. Remember however that you're not alone. The collective efforts of tens of millions of individuals can make an enormous difference. To coin a modern phrase - we can "Crowd Source" a positive future.

As a member of the UNAAWA you have already contributed to this future. Your membership dues, coupled with your active participation in our events, are what enables us to make great progress in our focus areas of Environment, Human Rights, Education and Women.

One means of directing this contribution is to become familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals. The 17 goals were adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 2015, and present us with a powerful roadmap for sustainable development. They are meant for all of us, including as individuals, not just governments or businesses.



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We can all contribute to these goals. Whether it's how we use energy in our homes and businesses, our adoption of a reduce, reuse and recycle approach, or our consumption patterns, or whether we treat our fellow members of society with respect, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity or religious belief.

I am pleased that the UNAA has formed a National Programme around the Sustainable Development Goals. The focus of this programme is on generating awareness throughout Australia on the Goals and our performance as a nation, as well as what roles all stakeholders can play in realising these ambitious goals by 2030. This complements the other national programmes of Peace, Climate Change and Human Rights (which is run from WA).

Our programme of activities is now well underway and many of you have already participated in our member networking sessions, the recent Fremantle South Beach clean-up and various presentations delivered over the last few months. Continue to look at our website and your email for all our upcoming events.

Your Executive Committee has been busy with an organisational review – kindly supported by a donation from Lotterywest. The review is aimed at creating a more professional base for UNAAWA and aligning our policies and procedures with best practice. Part of this alignment includes the need to revise our Constitution, and approve it a Special General Meeting of Members. Official notice will be provided in early August, however please save the date of 17 August 2017 at 7pm. Our AGM is scheduled for 15 October 2017 at 2pm. If approved, the AGM will be held under the new Constitution. All of this means that your Association is poised for a new era of growth and positive impact in the achievement of our goal – the promotion of the values and objectives of the United Nations and maximising Australia's contribution to this iconic institution.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next members and volunteers networking session – watch your email in box for details!

Steve Lennon, UNAAWA President

[More info: www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/)



**UNAAWA Special
General Meeting**

17 August 2017

@ 7pm

**UNAAWA Annual
General Meeting**

15 October 2017

@ 2pm

UN Ocean Conference: A Win for the Blue Economy and International Water Diplomacy

By Benjamin Walsh, Research Analyst, Food and Water Crises Research Programme

Background

From 5-9 June, the 193 member states of the United Nations participated in the UN Ocean Conference, run in concert with World Ocean Day on 8 June, and agreed to a new global approach to the conservation and protection of the world's oceans. The conference was focussed on addressing the Fourteenth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): marine conservation.

The conference concluded with the adoption of a 14-point Call for Action, as well as the registration of 1,300 voluntary commitments from governments, NGOs, businesses, academics and civil society activists. The aim of the conference was to boost momentum in achieving the Fourteenth SDG and to push for increased global commitment to environmental causes.

Comment

A significant outcome of the conference was the recognition placed by the international community on the value of oceans and their importance in a climate-changing world. Making that recognition unique, however, was the running of the conference under the banner of the "Blue Economy". The Blue Economy refers to a country's ocean space as a resource that not only plays a part in the transfer of goods and services, but in the sustainability of human life.



Fishing boat in the Indian Ocean off the island of Mombasa.

Credit: UN Photo/Milton Grant

The potential of the Blue Economy should not be thought of in terms of immediate economic output, but as a bastion for lasting human sustainability. The aim of the conference, therefore, was to alter the long-term thinking around how stakeholders approach oceans.

The third point in the Call for Action articulates the Blue Economy well: 'We recognise that our ocean covers three-quarters of our planet, connects our populations and markets, and forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage. It supplies nearly half the oxygen we breathe, absorbs over a quarter of the carbon dioxide we produce, plays a vital role in the water cycle and the climate system, and is an important source of our planet's biodiversity and of ecosystem services. It contributes to sustainable development and sustainable ocean-based economies, as well as to poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, maritime trade and transportation, decent work and livelihoods.'

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Apart from the renewed attention paid to the value of oceans, the real takeaway from the conference was the resounding support for it in light of the US decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord.

Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Co-operation and Climate and Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, believes that the conference 'galvanised and mobilised the political will... needed to address the ocean as a whole.' There can be no doubt that all stakeholders have a genuine concern for the future wellbeing of oceans. But, like any display of international politics, a desire to communicate and signal a message outside of the hard environmental concerns was present at the conference.

Given the derision afforded to President Trump's decision to leave the Paris Accord, stakeholders may have had something else to prove at the conference: that the international fight against climate change

and environmental conservation, despite US reticence is unwavering. The rejection of the Paris Accord, an agreement perceived as *the* international key to tackling climate change, in concert with the president's dubious behaviour on the home front, has mobilised the international community.

The response to Trump's decision was never going to be well received but what it has done is to embolden any future conference or agreement on any issue that involves international environmental and climate co-operation.

The Ocean Conference was not just a demonstration of ocean conservation efforts, but a desire to avoid the Trump path. Trump's decision to withdraw was actually a "shot in the arm" to international conservation efforts and has inspired stakeholders to prove that US docility will not have an impact upon any international commitments to environmental conservation.

"We recognise that our ocean covers three-quarters of our planet, connects our populations and markets, and forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage..."

Source: Published by Future Directions International Pty Ltd.

Web: www.futuredirections.org.au

South Sudan: Famine Conditions Abated, but Hunger Levels Continue to Rise

By Mervyn Piesse, Research Manager, Global Food and Water Crises Research Programme

Background

Famine was declared in two counties in Unity State in February 2017. While the severity of South Sudanese food insecurity has decreased and no part of the country is currently experiencing famine, a rise in the number of food insecure people means that the crisis is far from over.

Comment

Famine was declared in Leer and Mayendit counties after disruptions to food distribution networks. Food insecurity is measured on a five-point scale, with famine being the most severe. According to the scale, famine exists when at least 20 per cent of households in a given area face extreme food shortages; acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 per cent; and the death rate exceeds two adults out of every 10,000 in the population.



The number of South Sudanese people experiencing emergency levels of food insecurity, one level below famine conditions, has increased from one million in February to 1.7 million.

Since March, international humanitarian assistance has relieved the famine in Leer and Mayendit and prevented the situation from deteriorating further in Koch and Panyijiar counties. The continuation of armed conflict, poor governance and

difficulties in distributing aid, however, will only exacerbate food insecurity.

A political solution to the conflict remains necessary to improve South Sudanese food security in the long term.

It is estimated that the number of people at risk of starvation increased to six million – half the population – in June, up from 5.5 million in May. According to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report, there have never been more hungry people in South Sudan. If the distribution of aid is disrupted or supplies decline, it is likely that famine conditions will return to parts of South Sudan.

While food aid to South Sudan is currently secure, supplies to Uganda, where the majority of South Sudanese refugees reside, is falling short.

The UN has consistently warned that international aid efforts are insufficient. Donors are believed to be experiencing donor fatigue, as multiple crises show little sign of abating. It is still possible that 20 million people in four countries, Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, will experience famine conditions in 2017.

Less than 40 per cent of the US\$4.9 billion (\$6.44 billion) sought by the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs in February has been funded.

Challenging operating conditions in recipient countries could also contribute to the funding shortfall. The South Sudanese Government continues to make it difficult for aid agencies to operate in the country.

It is also becoming increasingly difficult for the global media to operate in South Sudan with at least 20 members of the foreign press banned from the country in the past six months, the introduction of stronger censorship measures and tougher visa restrictions. These conditions contribute to a lack of awareness and growing scepticism of aid efficiency among donors.

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Conflict and poor agricultural conditions have driven many farmers out of the country's south-west, which has historically been its breadbasket, leaving fields untended. Cereal production is likely to be lower than usual in 2018, leaving the country with a food deficit. With limited domestic food production and a broken importation system, foreign aid remains the only credible source of food.

While critics of foreign food aid argue that it merely rewards corrupt leaders and prolongs hardship, in South Sudan it has ameliorated famine conditions. Foreign aid is indisputably far from perfect and the sector would benefit from reform, however, in South Sudan at least, it remains vital.

Source: www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/south-sudan-famine-conditions-abated-hunger-levels-continue-rise/

A GLOBAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN? READY OR NOT, HERE IT COMES

By Professor Richard Tanter

Despite the apparent best efforts of Australia, the US and others, the second round of United Nations talks to negotiate a global nuclear weapons ban treaty is underway. With more than 130 countries participating, the proposed ban treaty may come into effect within the year.



Credit: AIIA

On 15 June, 132 member states of the UN met in New York to begin the second round of talks to negotiate a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. Following a successful first round in March, the conference chair, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez of Costa Rica, was confident that a text would be agreed to by the 7 July negotiation deadline.

Her confidence does not appear to be misplaced. Issues in the three weeks of talks will be limited to the precise terms of a nuclear ban treaty and the size of the majority of countries voting for it in New York.

The draft text would prohibit states from using, testing, developing, producing, manufacturing, otherwise acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, stationing, transferring or receiving control over nuclear weapons. Moreover, the draft treaty bans states from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any of those activities.

Other parts of the draft deal with assistance to nuclear weapons survivors,

the remediation of nuclear test sites, the establishment of a UN implementing organisation and conditions under which a nuclear weapons state may in the future forswear its weapons and join the treaty subject to verification and compliance requirements. The treaty would enter into force after being signed and ratified by 40 nations.

How has it come to this?

The long-term explanation is fairly simple: the non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the existing non-proliferation treaty (the NPT) have waited for the five nuclear weapons states to meet their obligations to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith. After half a century, Austria, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and another hundred or so countries have taken matters into their own hands. The goal of the ban treaty's proponents is to create a legally binding regime that prohibits nuclear weapons and thereby begin a global political process that undermines the legitimacy of nuclear weapons possession and use in any form.

In the short term, one reason for the likely success of the negotiations is that the nine countries that possess nuclear weapons have boycotted the meeting. US diplomacy has been either inept, epitomised by Ambassador Nikki Haley's squirm-inducing press conference outside the opening of the talks in March; absent, due to the vacancies on the upper floors of the US Department of State under Donald Trump; or quite simply left too late.

International reactions

Most US allies, sheltering under the nuclear umbrella, have stayed away, dealing themselves out of influence on the outcome. Australia, labelled a 'weasel state' for its spoiler role in the lead-up to these negotiations, now finds itself regionally isolated, with all the ASEAN states and all South Pacific states not only participating in the New York talks, but taking active roles to promote a successful outcome.

Australia, following what is literally a US script, argues that the treaty will:

- slow down progress on nuclear disarmament;
- weaken existing nuclear treaty regimes;
- be useless because the nuclear weapons states will not be party to the treaty; and
- widen the divide between countries relying on nuclear deterrence and those that do not.



Some of these claims are disingenuous and specious, but some are correct. In fact, there has been little progress on disarmament for over a decade, and there is precious little chance of even business-as-usual arms control in the age of Trump and Putin. Contrary to Australian and US claims, however, the ban treaty seeks to build on and strengthen the NPT, and to create a new global norm stigmatising nuclear weapons possession.

True, Russia, Israel and others are not going to sign up for the treaty any time soon, but after the vigorous British debate on Trident II renewal last year, the UK looks very much like a plausible nuclear disarmament threshold state. Had Theresa May faced that decision not a year ago, but this week, caught between a promise of a state visit from US President Trump on the one hand and imminent Brexit negotiations on the other, who is to say the result would not have been different? Britain constitutes the weak link in the chain of nuclear weapons states around the world's neck.

And it is certainly true that the treaty would deepen global divisions over nuclear weapons possession, as it should. Climate scientists have demonstrated that any use of even a fraction of the world's 15,000-plus nuclear weapons in war will not only bring catastrophic and irremediable harm to the victims, but also precipitate a global climate disruption spanning decades, leading to massive famine and worldwide economic disaster. And that is before we begin to consider the arguments for nuclear abolition presented by Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un.

so of ratifications. This will be followed by a new campaign to take Australia off the list of countries whose defences rely on the nuclear annihilation of millions in neighbouring countries. And then, armed with a global legally binding prohibitory regime, the long hard work of nuclear abolition can truly begin.

Richard Tanter is a professor at the University of Melbourne and chairs the Australian board of the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

Source: www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australian_outlook/global-nuclear-weapons-ban/

The treaty text is highly likely within three weeks, after which there will be a year or



Upcoming 2017 UNAA Inaugural Sustainable Development Goals Conference

On 21 and 22 November 2017 in Sydney, the United Nations Association of Australia is bringing together world leading experts, practitioners and inspirational speakers for a major conference to lead and support the transformation of Australian business towards an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future. More information: www.unaa.org.au/events/off-the-chart-conference/



ANZAC Day Service 2017

UNAAWA Global Representative Joseph A Caruso shares his account of this year's Anzac Day Service.

Nothing is more fitting and poignant than the wording of "The Ode of Remembrance" and the poem "In Flanders Fields" to respect our fallen.

The Ode of Remembrance

They shall grow not old, as we are that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will
remember them.
Lest we forget.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

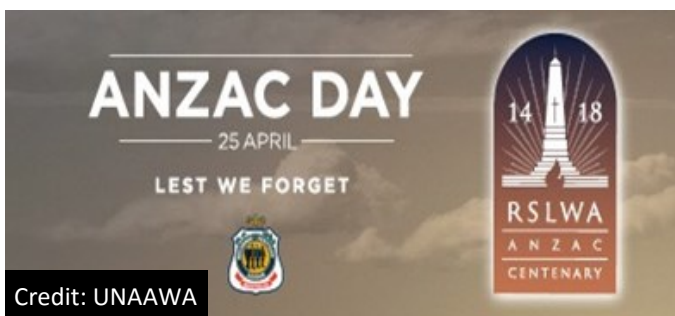


I have been attending these commemorative, solemn services for many years on behalf of UNAAWA. Each year while I slowly learn more, I still grapple to comprehend the suffering and logic of war. Both historical records and the ANZAC personal life experiences shared at RSLWA invitation gatherings illustrate the supreme sacrifices of the Australian Spirit. Of enduring bravely, and the ultimate sacrifice fate of our servicemen's involvement in Australia's great wars on foreign blood-stained battlefields between 1914 and 1918.

Sharing solemn discussions with veterans one commented, "We only know half the story of ANZAC and the European war", while another mentioned "We wanted to die to escape this hell".

The Western Front, an estimated 900km arch stretching north from Belgium to Southern France is where some of the most horrific bloodiest battles were fought. Consider the thought process of our Australian soldiers in sodden mud soaked fields and a hostile enemy almost a stone's throw away.

Those servicemen that did not return are remembered in the "Ode" and "Flanders Fields" memorials. Those that did return home endure and carry forever the scars of physical impairment and the mental, psychological recollection to the point that life could and can never be the same again. Their normal lives have been stolen, their families and country bear testament.



We need to be forever mindful of these veterans' lives and those in eternal resting, moreover in our modern-day advocacy our own capacity to 'fight for cause to prevent all conflict'.

My personal solemn reflective experience includes the privilege of having visited the sacred European war and cemetery resting fields of Ypres, Normandy, Fromelles, Bullecourt, Pozieres, St Quinton, le Hamel, Amiens and Villers-Bretonneux where our ANZACs fought no less than 29 battles.

Their legacy and sacrifice is dotted with thousands of white crosses, named and unnamed, located at the Western Fronts of France, Belgium, and Normandy. I also met a former Defence Minister, Stephen Smith, at Villers-Bretonneux by prior arrangement on the anniversary of French Australian success of this war front.

Both my wife's Grandfathers were servicemen of British and Australian Armies. My very own sadness was losing a best college mate in the Vietnam conflict. We shared so many wonderful times, in fact we were almost brothers. I still cannot believe this young life was taken.

While we mourn the Gallipoli battle of 25th April 1915, there are many events both past and present that give us pause for remembrance in Australia. As a nation committed to peace, we have military and humanitarian missions in many countries where peace may seem an "impossible dream" rather than a normal day reality.

As the memories of frontline war frontiers still live with us, we must not forget our other silent heroes: men and women that served behind the battle trenches in medical, logistics, support, and ancillary services that are sometimes forgotten in the mists of time.

We owe them a special moment of reflection, gratitude and respect.

May we all share a solemn moment to reflect the duty to our Anzac and military forefathers in giving to this land of freedom, free choice and our way of life.

Lest we forget.

The war archives record

102 Years Ago, 1915: The Gallipoli Landing led to the death of 44,000. Of those, 8,709 were Australians and 2,701 were New Zealanders.

100 Years Ago, 1917: Australia cemented its reputation of bravery, service and sacrifice in the third battle of Ypres. ANZAC diggers suffered 38,000 casualties.

100 Years Ago, 1917: The Australian Light Horse Brigade defeated Turkish battle lines at Beersheba, paving the way for an Allied victory in the deserts of Sini.

75 Years Ago, 1942: Australian diggers thwarted Japanese along the PNG Kokoda jungle trail.

75 Years Ago, 1942: Australian Seamen and Airmen, with American allies in the Pacific battle of Midway and Coral Sea, defeated the Japanese Imperial Navy.

75 Years Ago, 1942: Australian Nurses were massacred at Bangka Island. The sole survivor was Lieutenant-Colonel Vivian Bullwinkle.

70 Years Ago, 1947: Australian troops were called into peace keeping missions in Indonesia and other locations.

**SAVE THE DATE: UN DAY
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

Oct 27

Women's Committee walks Path of Hope



Hundreds of West Australian women and children seek shelter from domestic and family violence each year. Without the sustained support of organisations such as the Path of Hope, these vulnerable people would have nowhere to go.

UNAAWA Women's Committee convener Lara Silbert and deputy convener Lauren Chambers recently visited the Path of Hope Foundation's women's refuge. The pair met with Family and Domestic Violence Outreach Worker Tina Hudson to learn more about this important initiative.

The Path of Hope Foundation was created by the Salvation Army in partnership with the Perth Rotary Club, to help break the cycle of abuse and empower domestic violence survivors to improve their quality of life.



Picture L-R: Ms Lara Silbert, UNAAWA Women's Committee and Ms Tina Hudson, Path of Hope Foundation women's refuge.

Path of Hope empowers women affected by domestic violence with a range of programs to help them reintegrate into the community. Programs cover education, counselling, mentorship and legal aid. The rehabilitation centre is designed for women and includes a modern play and outdoor environment.

"Path of Hope is a wonderful place," said Ms Chambers. "The compassionate staff have created a welcoming, supportive and caring environment for women and their children, which will support them in rebuilding their confidence and their lives."

One of the main goals is to break the cycle of domestic violence explained Ms Hudson. "Unfortunately for many, this is not their first time at Path of Hope. In many cases they have sought refuge before, or even remember being here as a child with their own mothers."

The UNAAWA Women's Committee looks forward to assisting Path of Hope by raising awareness of domestic violence, as well as exploring partnership and volunteering opportunities.

"A key objective of the UNAAWA Women's Committee is to advocate for the empowerment of women by spreading awareness about gender equality issues," said Committee Convener Ms Silbert.

"Working together with foundations like Path of Hope helps us highlight taboo issues that affect women, such as domestic violence, and allows us to support these wonderful initiatives in our community."

To learn more about Path of Hope visit www.pathofhope.org.au.

By Natasha Smith, Communications Officer, Women's Committee

New UN head Guterres 'between a rock and a hard place,' says Red Cross chief

By Molly Anders



International Committee of the Red Cross President Peter Maurer and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. Photo by: Pierre Albouy / U.N. / CC BY-NC-ND

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer says he isn't surprised at the new United Nations Secretary General António Guterres' call for institution-wide U.N. reform and a renewed focus on conflict prevention. The pressure on the current multilateral system has been building — and will continue to build, he said — for a long time, and humanitarian

NGOs, business communities and academia to the table. On the other hand, countries whose populations or leaders are beginning to feel alienated by globalization — countries such as Russia but also to some extent, the United States and the United Kingdom — are divesting from the multilateral system, thereby undermining its political, development and humanitarian power on the global stage. This tension is compounded, Maurer said, by a rise in global terror and conflict, which strains not only the U.N.'s political influence, but its security and humanitarian capacities as well.

“The sort of traditional consensus-building of the U.N. system and bureaucratic blockages and bureaucratic complication is just not good enough.” — Peter Maurer, president of the ICRC

Maurer, who is a former Swiss diplomat, oversaw Switzerland's accession to multilateral organizations, including managing its relationship with the U.N.

After taking over as president of the ICRC in 2012, Maurer led the organization

If we were to redesign the U.N. based on today, based on current human needs it would look much, much different.

organizations working in the U.N.'s orbit *will* have a critical role to play.

“The U.N. is now sandwiched between two trends: This increasing importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and the re-emergence of the assertive state,” he told Devex on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and Africa in Jordan last month.

On the one hand, cross-sector partnerships are increasingly “an important reality,” he said, which can bring the private sector, public sector,

through an unprecedented period of growth, increasing the organization's budget by 50 percent in four years. The ICRC's reliance on the U.N. at a time when global conflicts were multiplying faster than ever meant that Maurer saw firsthand the U.N.'s struggle to retain a position in the world that was slowly but clearly becoming anachronistic.

“The sort of traditional consensus-building of the U.N. system and bureaucratic blockages and bureaucratic complication is just not good enough,” he said. “I think that's where we are now and why it is so

difficult to reconquer the space for a new form of multilateralism which probably cannot only be state-bound," he said.

A new model must include "many more stakeholders of global affairs," namely private sector entities, but also a model which "doesn't neglect states just because they are unassertive" in order to relocate its position, he said.

Maurer added though that Guterres is so far "doing a great job" of finding that fine line, specifically his approach on the humanitarian and development side "to shift the focus clearly to conflict prevention."

The current level of armed conflict worldwide costs the global economy approximately \$50 trillion per year, and deaths from armed conflict between 2008 and 2014 tripled from 56,000 to 180,000 according to a study by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Humanitarian organizations simply cannot continue to act as "clean-up crews for the dysfunctioning of the multilateral system," Maurer said. "The lack of impact of the multilateral system on the conflict situation, that's relatively recent in terms of these huge spiking costs," he said, explaining that while the tension has been growing for thirty years, costs "spiked only in the last five years," as the multilateral identity crisis comes to a head.

ICRC chief on why relief needs to evolve — with bipartisan support

Devex caught up with International Committee of the Red Cross President Peter Maurer about the West's backlash to refugees, the U.S. election results, rising threats to humanitarian workers and where the sector is headed.

But Guterres' proposed focus on conflict prevention also requires a long-overdue mindset shift among development and humanitarian organizations, he added. While conflict prevention has long been seen as a bridge between the often siloed work of humanitarians and development practitioners, Maurer said this bridge, as

well as these distinctions, are simply inventions holding back the sector from simply "meeting the needs of people."

"If your entry point is basic human needs and needs of people, then you can build some long-term perspective into short-term humanitarian assistance," he said, pointing to recent collaboration between the ICRC and the World Bank on famine prevention and mitigation in East Africa, as well as ICRC's livelihoods work with victims of the Yemeni civil war.

"I think the whole nonsense of the 'development humanitarian divide' comes

Humanitarian organizations simply cannot continue to act as clean-up crews for the dysfunctioning of the multilateral system.

from an international system to which we are outsiders. It's all an invention of bureaucracies which have been constituted as humanitarian or development bureaucracies," he said, pointing again to the U.N.'s structure, which he said has overstayed its welcome.

"If we were to redesign the U.N. based on today, based on current human needs," he said, "it would look much, much different."

Molly Anders is a global development reporter for Devex. Based in London, she covers U.K. foreign aid and trends in international development. She draws on her experience covering aid legislation and the USAID implementer community in Washington, D.C., as well as her time as a Fulbright Fellow and development practitioner in the Middle East to develop stories with insider analysis.

Source: www.devex.com/news/new-un-head-guterres-between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-says-red-cross-chief-90530#.WU2ct4ETLj0.mailto

Armed Conflict Survey shows conflict moving into cities around the world



Just ten conflicts accounted for more than 80% of the fatalities worldwide, according to this year's Armed Conflict Survey.

Syria's conflict, which is the subject of extensive media and diplomatic attention, was the world's most lethal conflict for the fifth year running. The second-most lethal conflict, by comparison, has received scant attention – Mexico's battle with criminal cartels, which accounted for 23,000 deaths.

Dr John Chipman, Chief Executive and Director-General of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) said: 'The death toll in Mexico's conflict surpasses those for Afghanistan and Somalia. This is all the more surprising, considering that the conflict deaths are nearly all attributable to small arms. Mexico is a conflict marked by the absence of artillery, tanks or combat aviation.'

The ten most lethal conflicts were: Syria, Mexico, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Turkey, South Sudan and Nigeria. The research, published by the International Institute for Strategic

Studies, shows deaths from conflict worldwide fell to 157,000 last year compared to 167,000 in 2015. Yet the IISS noted in parallel a rise in the number of intractable conflicts that have the potential to flare at short notice.

Dr Chipman said: 'Finding the right policy responses to "simmering conflicts" will be a major challenge for heavily pre-occupied policy makers, but essential if conflict fatalities around the world are to be reduced substantially. In this area as in so many others, good governance is a necessary precondition of good strategy.'

Civilians caught in conflict continued to suffer on a huge scale. Increasingly, refugees and conflict itself are gravitating towards towns and cities rather than following the traditional pattern of settling in dedicated refugee camps or in border areas. In Sudan, 192,000 people have fled violence since the start of 2016.

Dr Chipman, added: 'This year's Armed Conflict Survey shows how the character of conflict is changing. As displaced people have moved into cities, so too has conflict. Approximately half of the 36 conflicts

featured in the Armed Conflict Survey 2017, and all of the most lethal ones, have a significant urban component. If in the past the typical insurgent fought in the mountains, forest or jungle, today she or he is as likely to be found in an urban setting. This poses particular challenges for aid agencies as they look to track and support displaced people, and for armed forces as they battle insurgents.'

In Sudan, 192,000 people have fled violence since the start of 2016.

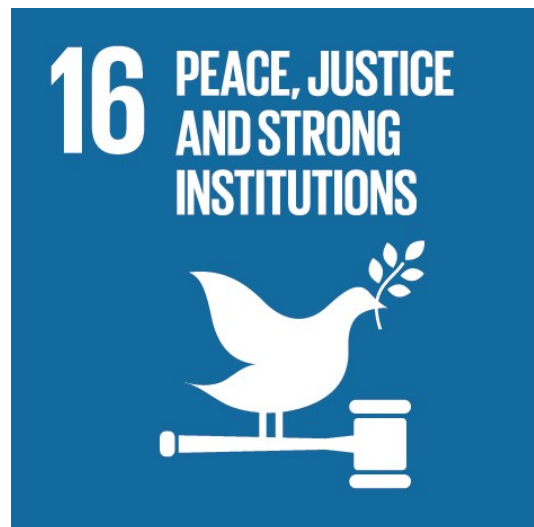
This year's edition of Armed Conflict Survey also demonstrates how United Nations peacekeepers are finding it more challenging to meet rising expectations. Professor Mats Berdal, of King's College London, argues the annual peacekeeping budget of US\$8 billion is under significant strain as UN troops contend with a surge in the number of global operations.

Research by Professor Elisabeth Wood, from Yale University, also shows that conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is more likely to be perpetrated by state groups than rebel forces. She argues policies can be effectively tailored to address specific patterns of CRSV in individual conflicts.

The Armed Conflict Survey contains detailed analysis of 36 of the world's high-

medium- and low-intensity conflicts. It also includes thematic essays by prominent scholars of conflict studies examining key issues for policymakers to emerge from current conflicts:

- Whither UN Peacekeeping?
- Conflict-related Sexual Violence
- The Islamic State's Shifting Narrative
- The Changing Foundations of Governance by Armed Groups
- Rebel-to-party Transitions



The International Institute for Strategic Studies is a world-leading authority on global security, political risk and military conflict.

Source: www.iiss.org/en/about-s-us/press-room

The current level of armed conflict worldwide costs the global economy approximately \$50 trillion per year, and deaths from armed conflict between 2008 and 2014 tripled from 56,000 to 180,000.

International Institute for Strategic Studies.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

By Dr Lesley Pruitt



Young people are often categorised as politically disengaged and apathetic. A program backed by Australia and the UN is seeking to shake this image, engaging youth and giving them a voice at the highest level of global politics.

For at least the past several decades, curriculum designers and policymakers around the world have envisioned young people to be citizens 'in the making' or even blamed them for a so-called 'democratic deficit'. However, a wide range of research has shown that youth are not as inactive or apathetic as frequently assumed.

When young people neglect to participate in the ways adults and governments might expect them to, blame is often placed on the youth themselves. However, older adults and public institutions would do well to reflect on the ways in which they might exclude young people, fail to listen to them, or perpetuate inaccurate stereotypes: suggesting they are a selfish generation uninterested in the common good. Even when youth do try to have a say on government policies, politicians and the media often publicly shame them for not doing it the right way.

While they often have little or no say in formal political processes, young people around the world practice citizenship in a number of ways in their everyday lives.

Although this work often flies under the radar of the political elite, at times youth take the chance to participate in more formal political processes, even at the global level.

Critical engagement

On Friday 2 June 2017 in Geneva Switzerland, nearly 100 participants took part in the Youth Forum ahead of the June 2017 meeting of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Today's young people are the largest youth cohort in history; in light of this, several speakers remarked on the importance of this event. Hosted by the World YWCA, the program included an intergenerational dialogue, a session explaining the work and procedures of the UNHRC, and a number of working groups. The main aim was to promote young people's meaningful participation in the UNHRC, provide a space to discuss issues important to them and to share their concerns with decision makers.

In explaining the working procedures of the UNHRC, Human Rights Advisor for Australian Mission, Renée Arian, told participants, "We would like to encourage you and not speak at you but with you and understand what best meets your needs as well." Noting the need for adults and older people to work harder to listen to children and youth, including in formal political spaces, Tanya Bennett of the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN said, "We need a mentality of partnership where we see youth as participants and leaders."

The Youth Forum, now in its second year, demonstrates the potential for long-term involvement of youth in global politics. Much of the youth participants' discussion focused on the need for institutionalising avenues to facilitate youth participation

and engagement in the UNHRC as well as related institutions. These efforts support statements and actions made by former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, who set working for and with youth as a priority in his Five-Year Action Agenda and called for a UN System-Wide Action Plan on Youth, which has since been initiated.

Similar to youth parliament programs, participants in the pre-UNHRC Youth Forum learned about how the UNHRC works and had ample opportunity to have their voices heard. Scholarship holders also followed up the one-day Youth Forum event with two days of intensive training on how to get their message across to decision makers in preparation for lobbying efforts to deliver their youth declaration.

Australia takes lead

As the program's principal donor, the Australian government offered ample financial support for youth to get involved in this opportunity with the UNHRC. In doing so, Australia has taken a lead in recognising that young people have fundamental rights to participate in decisions that affect their lives; as enshrined in a number of international agreements such as the International Conference on Population and Development's Programme of Action and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In watching the youth participants' progress, it is important that governments, non-government organisations, and intergovernmental bodies adapt, recognising and supporting the work youth are already doing and working to make space to include their needs and views in institutional politics. Instead of seeing local youth initiatives and global opportunities within an obvious hierarchy, young people's efforts at the various levels can be understood on a continuum of political participation, ranging from local to global in scale.

This year's Youth Forum participants identified a number of barriers to youth participating in a formal global political body like the UNHRC and drafted

recommendations on how these might be addressed. These recommendations included:

- ◇ the lack of positive engagement with youth by government officials nationally and internationally, including a tendency toward tokenism at times;
- ◇ lack of accessible and relevant information available for youth (noting the need for such resources to be developed in a wide variety of languages);
- ◇ financial barriers, such as a lack of funds to travel to such forums or to access online consultations where they do occur; and
- ◇ security barriers, such as an inability to travel due to visa restrictions on the home country.

In recognising these barriers, the forum highlighted the need to recognise the diversity among youth and ensure that all efforts to further include young people take an inclusive approach, drawing in young people from a variety of regions, languages, genders, and abilities.

The processes and outcomes of the UNHRC over the coming weeks will be an opportunity to consider if and how youth are being listened to at the international level and to reflect on further opportunities for their engagement, both at home and abroad. A good start would be listening to and engaging deeply with the recommendations in the declaration being drafted for release.

*Dr Lesley Pruitt is a senior lecturer in politics and international relations at Monash University. Her latest book, *The Women in Blue Helmets: Gender, Policing & the UN's First All-Female Peacekeeping Unit* is available through the University of California Press.*

Source: www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australian_outlook/youth-participation-human-rights-council/

MYANMAR POLITICAL REFORM: A SLOW BUT STEADY TRANSFORMATION

By Trevor Wilson



The lack of a clear campaign agenda for Myanmar's National League for Democracy in the 2015 elections has slowed the subsequent reform process. But with some changes now underway, the international community should remain patient.

Myanmar started on a road to fundamental political reform through a peaceful transfer of power in early 2016. The transfer was from the previous military-led regime to the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, whose leading role in the new government has not been challenged.

More than a year later, Myanmar's transition from military rule remains far from complete, but it has been going in the right direction. Whether the transition will be to genuine democracy remains to be seen, but it certainly involves fundamental political changes, some of which have yet to bed down. True changes in cultural values are also uncertain, but these undoubtedly need longer to take root.

Myanmar is ruled through a power-sharing arrangement under the flawed, but widely accepted and unamended, 2008 constitution. The army retains

absolute authority in national security, internal security and border affairs (including in Rakhine State, where the Rohingya crisis emerged). This has meant continued oppression by the Myanmar Army, which is still fighting what it calls "insurgencies" in some areas. However, Myanmar's overall circumstances are probably better than ever before.

New reform legislation to sweep away 'old ways' has been limited in areas outside economic policy but has included the restoration of freedom of assembly (allowing strikes and protests) and ending print media censorship. Some changes to the structure of government have been implemented, but perhaps not enough.

The changes have created few opportunities for Myanmar's young people, and there has been little real progress on rule of law reforms. The judicial system remains corrupt, unfair and inefficient.

Consolidating political reform

The transfer of authority to Myanmar's 14 states after 2011 remains incomplete and has not been accompanied by the necessary funding, staff or expertise. Effective federal mechanisms have not yet been prescribed or properly debated. They will need to be designed to fit Myanmar's circumstances, but insufficient discussion has occurred on



suitable federal options for Myanmar and development gaps have not closed.

Attempts to promote economic reforms have been only partly effective; US economic sanctions were not lifted until September 2016. Thus, international financial institutions have not been fully empowered to assist Myanmar as part of a nationwide development strategy. Furthermore, the roles of former regime business cronies are unclear, creating more uncertainty.

Lacking a clear policy direction has been a major problem for the NLD, which decided to avoid making specific public commitments before the November 2015 elections.

Notwithstanding the mandate delivered by its convincing election victory, the central government has been slow to

International observers will need to be patient; most reforms in Myanmar will need time to become embedded and adjusted to local conditions.

adopt new nationwide policies in many areas. Finalising a national peace process became the political priority, quite correctly, but this was always going to take a long time; differences among ethnic groups about power-sharing arrangements had never been adequately settled. In addition, there were no clear proposals or guidelines for nationwide judicial reforms.

Before its election victory, the NLD announced nothing on land reforms, although this now seems to be underway. Nor did it lay out concrete policies regarding important areas such as climate change, control over national resources or water management

arrangements. As a result, there was generally more uncertainty than necessary over government policies and priorities.

Managing popular expectations, domestically and internationally, has been a major challenge. Despite domestic support for reforms, few detailed policies have been issued by the NLD government. This was deliberate, but seems to have complicated matters and may delay reforms. Aung San Suu Kyi's retention of a veto over all policy development has now been identified as a problem.

Still, international observers will need to be patient; most reforms in Myanmar will need time to become embedded and adjusted to local conditions.

Roles for the international community

Myanmar has been unusually receptive to international ideas and suggestions during its political transition. But ultimately any choices and decisions must be made by the Myanmar people and their legitimate representatives. Large donors, including the UN Development Programme, have already made multi-year commitments to support reforms beyond the 2015 elections, despite some claims that donors were not prepared to make such long-term commitments.

However, it is not for the United Nations to direct Myanmar's adjustments to its political arrangements. Regional politico-economic entities will play a large role, beyond normative changes, but most organisations with possible roles (ASEAN above all) lack political strength and have had few regional successes. Myanmar could direct more attention toward completing infrastructure links with the rest of Asia for both socioeconomic and strategic reasons.

Looking ahead, reforming Myanmar's institutions will be critical but difficult. It will take time to foster domestic

Techniques of greater inclusiveness, greater responsiveness and greater mutual support need to be pursued more deliberately.

consensus, especially where sensitive political risks are involved. In Myanmar, institutions such as the army, the parliament, the bureaucracy, the courts, educational institutions and the media need to be more flexible, more responsive and more collegiate.

In Myanmar, different groups and interests need to become more cohesive, less competitive and more collaborative. They need to develop a sense of 'whole of country'. These tendencies are not necessarily commonly found in Myanmar, but they can be learned. Techniques of greater inclusiveness, greater responsiveness and greater mutual support need to be pursued more deliberately. Myanmar's leaders need to

stop focussing on whether one group benefits more than others from any one policy.

Australian expertise is generally viewed positively and could be much more useful for Myanmar than it is now, but that would require a greater aid commitment.

Trevor Wilson is a visiting fellow in the Department of Political & Social Change at the Australian National University.

Source: www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australian_outlook/myanmars-political-reform-slow/

International Day of UN Peacekeepers - 29th May 2017

We are no doubt aware of the chapters of history from our own learning and possibly our family's past involvement of the horrors of war and conflicts. Some of us can write and recall global, major historical conflicts in war times and rightly commemorate solemn observance to those that gave their lives and the many that went into combat in direct and supporting roles.

However, we at times are remiss to spare a thought for our own UN peacekeepers spread across the globe where conflict has taken its human and social toll. There are **3,400 UN peacekeepers** who have lost their lives in the pursuit of preserving mankind's greater right of peace.

Today, UN peacekeepers are present in no less than **12 foreign countries**. It's a time to reflect on the silent brigade and their families and of course their unequivocal committed duty to uphold world peace.

Joseph Caruso, UNAAWA



landscapes and its habitat “creatures” rests with us as responsible individuals, citizens and leaders.

By Joseph A Caruso, UNAOWA



History of Adherence and Observance—5th June

Globalisation, population demographics, climate change, food sufficiency, and water are shaping the 21st century. The drifts and movements will no doubt leave a residual footprint on global economics, societies, and our environmental responsibility.

The genesis for World Environment Day on 5th June commenced in 1972 in Stockholm as a result of a UN General Assembly resolution. A further resolution proclaimed the UN Environmental Programme which drives global initiatives in managing compliance and safeguarding workable, sustaining principles to protect our planet earth for future generations.

In 1974 World Environment Day celebrated with the Only One Earth international landmark motto, while Serious Care as Custodian for protecting sea, land and atmosphere began in the late 1970s.

Background to Today’s Model

World Environment Day embraces global awareness to our planet earth in all material things impacting on human life, endangered species and the natural environment of sea, land and air. It’s a collective responsive action of individuals from all walks of life and over 100 sovereign stake holders. No matter whether it’s sea, land or water; the responsibility to protect, manage and save for future generations the beauty of these

Celebrate the Ocean and all it Provides—8th June

Extract from Marine Matters by Phil Coulthard

“Irrespective of your level of passion or interest for the marine environment in general, healthy oceans are critical for our short-term well-being and our long-term survival. They generate the air we breathe, regulate our climate and provide invaluable resources to help us survive, so take the opportunity and become involved in this special day.

Although the overall aim of World Oceans Day is simply to remind us how important oceans are, the progressive growth in its popularity over the last 20 years has gone a long way towards making some real changes within the global community.

Not only has it secured a collaborative effort amongst international governments, environmentalists and community groups to combat the health and sustainability of our oceans, it has also managed to change the way many of us interact with the ocean and our environment in general.

It also offers a fantastic opportunity to discover the diversity of creatures and habitats that exist within it, how our daily lives affect them and how we are all genuinely

interconnected. Most importantly, it helps us to identify what actions and modifications we can make as individuals and as a community to collectively make a difference now and in the future.

'...healthy oceans are critical for our short-term well-being and our long-term survival.'

Sanctioned by the UN and driven by an international network of more than 1,000 aquariums, zoos,

museums and marine centres, the day offers a wide range of activities under this year's theme "Our Oceans, Our Future".

With a conservation action focus on plastic pollution, involvement in the day might be spending an hour or two cleaning up a section of your favourite beach or simply avoiding the deliberate use of single use plastics."

Source: dolphindiscovery.com.au/media/marine-matters/

www.worldoceansday.org

The scourge of microplastics

Microplastics, tiny particles of plastic measuring less than 5mm in diameter are a colossal peril



At least

51 trillion

microplastic particles are already in our oceans



A personal care or cosmetic product can contain as much plastic as the packaging it comes in.



Machine-washing a single synthetic garment releases more than

1,900

microplastic fibres

#CleanSeas

UN 
environment

UN OBSERVANCES

2017 JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

www.free-printable-calendar.com

2017 AUGUST						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

www.free-printable-calendar.com

First Saturday in July

International Day of Cooperatives

11 July

World Population Day

18 July

Nelson Mandela International Day

28 July

World Hepatitis Day

30 July

International Day of Friendship

9 August

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

12 August

International Youth Day

19 August

World Humanitarian Day

23 August

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition (UNESCO)

29 August

International Day Against Nuclear Tests

30 August

International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances



UNAAWA member events provide chance to connect and network

Following on from the success of the inaugural Members and Volunteers Cocktail Evening on 29 March this year, the second of these evenings was held at Adelphi Grill, Parmelia Hilton on Friday 16 June.

We had a wide attendance with members, new members and volunteers. We would like to thank the Parmelia Hilton for their continued support of this event.

Once again, the evening provided a wonderful opportunity to network, celebrate and connect with like-minded people committed to making a difference.

We look forward to seeing you at the next one!



Stay connected. Follow us!

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