



**WORLD FEDERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS**  
**FEDERATION MONDIALE DES ASSOCIATIONS POUR LES**  
**NATIONS UNIES**

*A peoples' movement for the United Nations*

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**Report to the 39<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, Seoul, Republic of Korea,  
10 – 12 August 2009**

**From the Secretary-General of the World Federation of United Nations Associations**

The Constitution of the World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA) states its first objective to be “a peoples’ movement for the United Nations”. At the 38<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, in November 2006, an additional commitment was made in the Buenos Aires Declaration, for WFUNA “to bring the United Nations closer to the people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.

At the 38<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, Dr Hans Blix was elected President of WFUNA, Ms Pera Wells became the Secretary-General and Mr Pang Sen was chosen to Chair the Executive Committee.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, who came to office in January 2007, is calling for a new multilateralism, where cooperation replaces confrontation, creativity replaces stalemate. He believes that in this increasingly interconnected world the focus of the United Nations needs to be on critical global issues such as climate change, sustainable development, nuclear non-proliferation, and human rights. This needs a new form of global leadership and WFUNA has a role to play. As Ban Ki-moon said in May 2007:

*“The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) and its more than 100 member groups are irreplaceable champions of our organization. WFUNA informs, educates, and enlightens its national constituencies about the promise and the performance of the United Nations. WFUNA brings home to them that the UN’s agenda is everyone’s agenda, and the issues of concern to the UN concern us all as human beings.”*

The theme of the 39<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is *Global Citizens for the United Nations*. To enable WFUNA to build a 3 year program of work on this theme, a Global Citizen Campaign will be launched at the Plenary Assembly. A brochure on the Case Statement for the Campaign will be circulated at the Plenary Assembly. In summary, it states that:

- People throughout the world are experiencing the most severe set of interconnected global crises—finance, the economy, climate change, food, fuel, water —since the United Nations was formed
- The United Nations remains to this day the indispensable organization for dealing with global issues
- WFUNA must keep pace with, if not anticipate, the further need for cooperative and democratic problem solving of global issues

- WFUNA's program of work should continue to give priority to engaging young people with the United Nations, including Model UN conferences, capacity building of UNAs, projects in Africa, and on human rights, peace and disarmament, and sustainable development.

## **Strategic Plan of Action**

Since the 38<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, the Secretariat's program of work has been based on the Strategic Plan of Action which was approved by the 192<sup>nd</sup> Executive Committee meeting in March 2007. The Secretary-General's reports to the following four Executive Committee sessions have been based on this Plan of Action.

This report presents an overview of the key developments and trends during the period under review. The attached database provides a detailed account of the Secretariat's activities and outcomes.

The Secretariat itself has become more unified, transparent and accountable. The Geneva and New York offices operate under one budget and all the accounts are now processed in the New York office. A paper on Best Practices of Financial Management has been approved by the Executive Committee and an Audit Committee has been set up to report to the Executive Committee. Detailed information on WFUNA's finances will be presented to the Plenary Assembly in the report of the Treasurer.

### **1. Membership of WFUNA**

The Secretariat continually seeks and supports opportunities to set up UNAs and UN Youth Associations in countries where they do not exist, or where one has lapsed and could be established again.

New UNAs have been established in 8 countries: Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Rwanda and Togo. In March 2008, the Executive Committee approved the papers for the establishment of a UNA in Montenegro, but this UNA has since been dissolved.

A UNA has been set up in Somalia but the people involved have declined to pay membership dues to WFUNA. The Executive Committee took the decision that it is a requirement of UNA membership of WFUNA that annual dues are paid. In the lead up to the Plenary Assembly in Seoul, there were 107 UNAs registered as members of WFUNA.

There has been an increase in the number of UN Youth and student Associations (UNYAs) - when WFUNA-Youth's Interim Authority was set up at the 37<sup>th</sup> PA in 2003 there were 20 UNYAs, at the first WFUNA-Youth meeting at the 38<sup>th</sup> PA in 2006 there were 25 UNYAs and now there are 53 UNYAs - of which 37 have registered for the WFUNA-Youth Plenary in Seoul. Note - UNYAs may only be admitted to WFUNA-Youth if there is a UNA in the country which approves of its establishment and affiliation.

In response to a letter from Dr Blix, the President of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, wrote on 11 April 2007 to the Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York to draw their attention to the value of having a United Nations Association in

their country. The letter noted that UNAs 'significantly contribute to increasing peoples' interest in, and support for, the work and activities of the United Nations'.

Diverse efforts to promote an interest in setting up UNAs were made by the Secretariat and members of the Executive Committee. However the best results are achieved by a UNA working at the regional level. For example:

- UNA-Uganda helped to set up UNA-Rwanda
- UNA-Venezuela helped to set up the UNA in Colombia
- UNA-Georgia, with the support of UNA-Sweden, assisted with the setting up of UNA-Armenia
- UNA-Canada is working with UNA-South Africa to set up a UNA in Malawi
- UNA-Australia is helping to set up UNAs in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

At the suggestion of the chair of the Membership Committee, a questionnaire was sent in 2008 to all UNAs that had not paid their dues in 2007, and in 2009, a registered letter was sent to UNAs that had not paid their dues in 2008. As a result of this correspondence, the Secretariat proposes to recommend that UNAs which have not paid membership dues for over 3 years and shown no sign of activity, be disaffiliated.

## **2. Capacity building for existing and newly established UNAs**

WFUNA's Global Citizen Campaign includes elements of UNA capacity-building, both through the program of projects and as a stand-alone priority.

The WFUNA Secretariat arranges for UNA-representatives who accompany their student delegations to WFUNA Model UN Conferences to have separate meetings with each other, and with staff from the local UN Information Centers if they are available.

At the annual DPI/NGO conferences, WFUNA arranges meetings for the participating UNAs to meet with each other.

The office in Geneva organized the WFUNA 2008 European UNAs Meeting with the support of UNA Switzerland. Twenty European UNAs participated in the meeting, which represented an opportunity for UNAs to share projects and best practices. Representatives of the UNOG, OHCHR, WFP, UNESCO, UNDP, UNHCR and UNCTAD were invited to participate as speakers.

The Indian Federation of UNAs held the 8<sup>th</sup> WFUNA Asia Pacific Conference in New Delhi, 26 – 29 March 2009; the agenda made provision for discussion of capacity-building needs of UNAs in the region.

## **3. Improve two-way communication between WFUNA leadership and member UNAs**

In many respects, Hans Blix has become the voice and face of WFUNA. His leadership is based on a profound knowledge and understanding of the United Nations and has been an inspiration to members of UNAs and to an ever increasing global network of people who are drawn to his vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction. He has travelled the world on behalf of WFUNA, making over 20 trips to participate in Executive Committee meetings UNA conferences. He

presided over several WFUNA meetings in Geneva on human rights and disarmament. Every issue of the WFUNA newsletter, *UN Connections*, has had a message from him, and many UNAs have requested and received messages from him for their events.

Under the able chairmanship of Pang Sen, the Executive Committee meetings have been productive and fully accountable – all documents have been posted on the members section of the website. It is beneficial for the WFUNA leadership to meet in different parts of the world, and it was therefore much appreciated that the UNAs of China, Cyprus and Canada hosted meetings of the Executive Committee in their countries.

While the Secretariat continued to send letters and other documents to UNAs by mail, communicating through email and online newsletters has become increasingly accepted as an effective and efficient means of keeping UNAs informed about WFUNA's activities.

The 96<sup>th</sup> issue of *UN Connections* was published in July 2009. Whereas earlier issues highlighted a global civil society champion, the aim now is to help “bring the UN closer to the people”. Each issue of *UN Connections* provides detailed information about a current policy issue or program and includes an interview with a senior UN official working in the area who explains what is happening and ways in which civil society is engaged. The newsletter showcases the activities of one UNA, has updates on WFUNA's programs, recent UNA events and Model UN conferences and short reports on the UN's work on the three pillars of peace and security, development and human rights. There is an annual New Year quiz on what has been and will be happening at the UN. Visitors to UN headquarters in NY are encouraged to sign up for *UN Connections* which now has over 20,000 subscribers and is available in English and Spanish.

The WFUNA Website attracts many thousands of visitors from around the world and has been continually updated. The contents are now available in Spanish, French and English. Two new websites have been created – [www.disarmamenthub.org](http://www.disarmamenthub.org) and [www.humanrightsnexus.org](http://www.humanrightsnexus.org).

Following the success of the first video on WFUNA, which was shown at the 38<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, the Secretariat has been equipped with cameras and is producing videos on a regular basis. There are over 30 videos featured on the WFUNA YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/user/wfunas](http://www.youtube.com/user/wfunas)) all produced by the Secretariat, and dozens more have been created by students and others who participate in WFUNA's programs. The videos and other media resources are available in the new multimedia section of the WFUNA website ([www.wfuna.org/Multimedia](http://www.wfuna.org/Multimedia)). With a stable track record of video making, efforts are now being made to encourage and provide opportunities and capacity for UNAs and youth members to make and share their videos through WFUNA's networks.

In recent years, there has been a major shift in how people interact with each other through online social networking sites. WFUNA is now using tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Google, TakingITGlobal, BluMail, Ning, and Change.org in two ways: first, to encourage people to talk about priority issues that are of interest to WFUNA and the United Nations; and second, to create networks to support and implement projects. For example, for each regional Model UN conference, there is a TakingITGlobal project page created where the delegates can meet each other, strategize, discuss topics and share resources before the conference, and stay in touch and collaborate afterwards. These online resources, as well as blogs and Google/Yahoo groups are used for internal

communication with UNAs and UNYAs. The New York and Geneva offices share documents on Google Docs.

To promote awareness of WFUNA's outreach to young people, Hans Blix and William vanden Heuvel co-authored an article "The Young Generation Prepares to Support the United Nations" which was published in the Spring 2009 issue of The Ambassadors Review. The full article is at: <http://www.americanambassadors.org>. It concludes with this statement:

*We encourage the United Nations and member governments to draw upon the fresh vision, connectedness, creativity and enthusiasm of the young people who are ready to contribute to strengthening the institution, and working towards common goals in new ways.*

#### **4. Maintain close consultative relations between the WFUNA leadership and the leadership of the United Nations**

The WFUNA President and SG, together with the President of the Friends of WFUNA, have had two formal meetings with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on Tuesday 27 February 2007 and Monday 27 April 2009. The Chair of the ExCo attended the first meeting and the Incoming WFUNA SG the second. At both meetings, the UN SG made a commitment to attend the 39<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly in Seoul.

Dr Blix has close contacts with many senior people in the UN, including the Office of Disarmament Affairs. The WFUNA SG has maintained good relations with the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The 10 year review of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs' NGO Committee 1999 - 2009, devotes a page to WFUNA in the section on "Partnerships for Success".

The USG for Strategic Communications and Public Information, Kiyoo Akasaka, has shown a particular interest in WFUNA. He spoke to the Executive Committee meeting in New York in March 2008 and has participated in Model UN conferences hosted by UNAs in the Dominican Republic, Republic of Korea and Russia. At Mr Akasaka's initiative the UN is hosting the first Global Model UN Conference (GMUN) at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 5-7 August 2009. He invited WFUNA to be a major partner which enabled us to ensure that invitations were sent to UNAs that have Model UN programs. UNAs have facilitated the participation of many students in GMUN.

In Geneva, Ms Martinetti has regular meetings with the Office of the Director General, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Contacts have been developed with NGO Liaison Offices of the majority of the UN organizations present in Geneva.

While the NY office keeps in touch with the office of the Global Compact and the WFUNA SG has attended their functions, notably the Global Compact Summit in Geneva in July 2007, there is great potential to develop relations between UNAs and the Global Compact Local Networks at the country level. At the end of 2007, information was sent to all UNAs about the Local Networks. From the Global Compact website, it is evident that UNAs in Australia, Dominican Republic, Germany, San Francisco and Venezuela are engaging with the Local Networks. This list may not

be complete. It is recommended that the Plenary Assembly consider how to expand UNA connections with the Global Compact Local Networks.

WFUNA actively supported the Conference “On our Common Humanity in the Information Age, Principles and Values for Development” which was held at the UN on 29 November 2006, run by the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development – GAID. The aim was to revive the spirit of cooperation and to send a strong signal about the role of the UN in global human development. The WFUNA SG was the Moderator for the Dialogue Session on Solidarity and Equity. The report on the conference is at <http://www.un-gaid.org/> - under Publications. WFUNA is now represented on the GAID Strategic Council. It is recommended that the Plenary Assembly considers how WFUNA can most effectively engage with this dynamic Global Alliance.

## **5. Implement programs that facilitate partnerships between UNAs, the UN and other bodies in support of the UN**

WFUNA’s policy work is based on the three pillars of the UN: peace and security, development and human rights. In each case, WFUNA works in partnership with the relevant UN agencies and civil society networks.

WFUNA was re-elected to the *CoNGO* Board of Directors at the meeting in Geneva in December 2008. Mr. Sundeep Bhutoria represented WFUNA at the *CoNGO* Board of Directors Meeting in Thailand (23-25 February 2009), where WFUNA was elected to the position of Secretary of *CoNGO*.

### ***Peace and security***

The International Day of Peace, on 21 September, was established by the General Assembly as a “day of global ceasefire and non-violence” for “commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace within and among all nations and people”. Under the slogan “WMD - We Must Disarm” this year's campaign is focused on UN SG Ban Ki-moon's drive to persuade world leaders to work harder for a world free of nuclear weapons. He is asking everyone to participate and is using social networking sites to spread the word. In addition, consideration is now being given to designating a day in October as the International Day for A World Free of Nuclear Weapons.

Inspired by Hans Blix, WFUNA’s work on disarmament has been significantly increased. The successful program “Students for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World” has encouraged young people around the world to inform themselves of the dangers of the nuclear weapons threat and to come forward with their own ideas on how to free the world of these weapons. Global essay, video and poster competitions have been held and a special Website created to showcase the outcomes of the students' efforts. Over 230 submissions were received from 49 countries in 2008. See [www.disarmamenthub.org](http://www.disarmamenthub.org). Winners of the 2009 competition will be given the opportunity to attend the 62nd DPI NGO Conference “For Peace and Development: Disarm Now!” to be held 9 -11 September, 2009 in Mexico City.

WFUNA collaborated closely with UNA-UK/Scotland in the arrangements, conduct and follow-up of A One Day International Conference to Prime the 2010 Review of the NPT - "Civil Society and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty", that was held in the Scottish Parliament, 16 April, 2009.

WFUNA has maintained a good collaborative relationship with Steve Killelea whose organization, Vision of Humanity [www.visionofhumanity.org](http://www.visionofhumanity.org) produces the Global Peace Index and who is working in close conjunction with the UN Global Compact to articulate the business case for promoting peace.

There is growing civil society support for the concept of a United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS), an initiative strongly supported by Sir Brian Urquhart, former UN Under Secretary-General and Global Action to Prevent War. <http://www.globalactionpw.org/>

### ***Development***

In line with the recommendation of the 38<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, the Secretariat has given continuing priority to promoting support for the Millennium Development Goals.

From 2001 – 2007 WFUNA and the North-South Institute conducted research on global civil society and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and published hard copy annual reports in English, French and Spanish. The final report in 2007 was published only online: [www.nsi-ins.ca/english/research/progress/55.asp](http://www.nsi-ins.ca/english/research/progress/55.asp). Its survey reached out to youth groups as well as organizations working with young people. The report called for young people to be seen as contributors to the MDGs and not just beneficiaries.

Each of WFUNA's regional Model UN Conference programs has highlighted an aspect of the MDGs. The third WFUNA Asia/Pacific regional Model UN Conferences was held in Incheon, ROK in July 2008. Over 30 UNAs sent delegates. To read the Incheon Declaration go to: [www.wfuna.org/IncheonDeclaration](http://www.wfuna.org/IncheonDeclaration)

The UNA-Dominican Republic hosted International Conferences of the Americas/ LAC Regional Model UN in October 2007 and 2008. A "STAND UP against Poverty" was conducted on both occasions, at which over 500 students stood on the beach, dressed in campaign white, and were photographed from a helicopter.

It is regretted that WFUNA did not convene a regional Model UN Conference in Africa during this period, although East African sub-regional conferences were organized by UNAs. However, a project proposal for annual African sub-regional Model UN Conferences is included in the WFUNA Global Citizen Campaign plan.

WFUNA Communications Strategist, Fruzsina Molnar, led a collaboration between WFUNA, IFUNA and IFUNA-Youth that created the Global Youth MDG Summit, held in Mumbai, India from 7-11 November 2008. Ms Molnar arranged video-messages from USG Kiyoko Akasaka and other UN staff to be shown at the opening ceremony. Over 300 participants from 13 countries worked in MDG teams to create 16 videos (2 on each MDG) based on their learning about the MDGs during the conference, and a day spent in rural villages with local NGOs. The 8 winning

films are available at [www.wfuna.org](http://www.wfuna.org). A screening event of the films was held in New York on 12 January 2009.

The WFUNA SG participated in the MDG Awards night at the General Assembly on 17 March 2009. She spoke about WFUNA's Model UN Program on the MDGs. The webcast of the evening event [http://iclips.net/mdg\\_awards\\_plist.html](http://iclips.net/mdg_awards_plist.html) has a marvelous section showing the MDG award being received by Bishop Desmond Tutu.

During the period under review, the Secretariat dedicated increasing time and attention to the issues of climate change and financing for development. The UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, held in NY from 24 – 26 June 2009, recognized the need for a paradigm shift in development policies to integrate economic, environmental and social considerations more effectively and to develop the capacity of the United Nations to provide a more coherent and systemic framework to overview global development policies and practices.

### ***Human Rights***

The Geneva office continued to hold annual Human Rights Seminars in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

- In 2007 the theme was *Human Rights for “We the Peoples”*: what to expect from the UN Human Rights Council? The session was chaired by Pang Sen, Chair of the WFUNA Executive Committee.
- In 2008 the theme was *60 Years towards the Universality of Human Rights: The Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review*. Dr Alexei Borisov, Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee, chaired the meeting.
- At both meetings presentations were made by Professor Jan Wouters from UNA Flanders-Belgium, Dr Yvonne Donders, UNA-Netherlands and Cissa Wa Numbe, UNA-DRC. 15 UNAs were represented at the first meeting and 21 at the second, together with diplomats, NGOs and academics. WFUNA Hon. President Gregory Kovrizhenko brought a group of Russian students to both seminars.

WFUNA's human rights program of work in 2008 was focused on the commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It culminated with the launch on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008 of WFUNA's own human rights website - [www.humanrightsnexus.org](http://www.humanrightsnexus.org).

A highlight of the year was the first ever global online dialogue on the universality of human rights. Based on the Millennium Project's Real Time Delphi platform, it was conducted during May-June 2008. A total of 854 responses were received from UNAs, academics and civil society activists. While affirming the universality of human rights, the responses revealed a growing concern about the deterioration of economic and social rights, well in advance of the outbreak of the global financial crisis in September 2008. The results were presented by Irene Martinetti in a paper to the United Nations DPI/NGO conference held in Paris 3 -5 September 2008 on the topic “Reaffirming Human Rights: the Universal Declaration at 60”. See the paper at [www.humanrightsnexus.org](http://www.humanrightsnexus.org)

The Program Director is the Co-chair of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning.

## **6. Millennium Project**

At the initiative of Honorary President, Professor Mihaly Simai, WFUNA accepted The Millennium Project (MP) under its wing as an autonomous project. The collaboration was approved at the 192<sup>nd</sup> Ex Co in March 2007 and formalized at the 193<sup>rd</sup> Ex Co in September 2007 with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which enabled the MP to use WFUNA's not-for-profit tax ID.

The Millennium Project, led by Mr Jerome Glenn, is composed of a global network of Nodes whose members are futurists. Each year they produce The State of the Future reports – the 2007 and 2008 reports were under the auspices of WFUNA. The reports have been highly acclaimed by diverse authorities and are widely read in the UN Secretariat. On the occasion of the election of the President of ECOSOC on Thursday 15 January, 2009, the head of the ECOSOC Secretariat, Mr Seth, arranged for Mr Glenn, to give a presentation on The State of the Future 2008.

In the course of doing the audit of WFUNA's accounts this year, the accountants recommended that the MP should obtain its own status as a not-for-profit organization. While the US Internal Revenue Service accepts temporary arrangements such as provided for in the MOU, it prefers each organization to have its own tax ID. On 13 June, 2009 Mr Glenn received notification from the Internal Revenue Service that the MP had been awarded 501(c) (3) status with its own tax ID.

The 196<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Committee meeting in March approved the decision to terminate the MOU between WFUNA and The Millennium Project.

**7. Fundraising: Aim to develop the capacity of the World Federation of UN Associations to operate on the basis of an annual budget of \$1 million.**

The Friends of WFUNA was set up at the initiative of Arthur Ross in 2001 to help cover the Secretariat's operating costs. Ambassador William vanden Heuvel has been the President of the Board of Directors. The annual fund-raising luncheons enjoy the support of a group of generous people who care about the United Nations. Ambassadors and senior UN officials attend the luncheons and in so doing learn about WFUNA's programs and activities.

It was a great sadness to us all when Arthur Ross died in September 2007. The last luncheon he attended, on 7 May 2007, honored Ban Ki-moon and Hans Blix. In 2008, Hans Blix hosted the luncheon at which William vanden Heuvel was honored and in 2009, the luncheon honored Gillian Sorensen, who is currently the National Advocate for the United Nations at the UN Foundation. For further information about the Friends of WFUNA and the luncheons see [www.wfuna.org/WFUNALuncheons](http://www.wfuna.org/WFUNALuncheons)

In December 2008, The Friends of WFUNA, agreed to provide funds for WFUNA to employ a consultant to develop a fundraising campaign. The result is WFUNA's Global Citizen Campaign which aims to raise \$5.5 million to cover the program of work for WFUNA over the next three years. The WFUNA SG and Incoming SG, and all paid staff in the NY and Geneva offices, have been working very hard on the Campaign which has entailed drafting project proposals, letter-writing, weekly teleconferences and strategizing. We all look forward to launching the Campaign at the Plenary Assembly and to promoting a worldwide conversation among UNA members about what it means to be a global citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Conclusion**

It has been a great honor and joy for me to serve as Secretary-General of the World Federation of United Nations Associations. Thank you to all for making it such a privilege and pleasure to work with you. I have come to the conclusion that the people who established this international organization over 60 years ago provided a superb constitutional foundation. WFUNA was ahead of its time in articulating a vision of a peoples' movement for the United Nations – well before the invention of the internet. Looking back over the years, it is exciting to see how WFUNA has changed with the changing times, while remaining true to its essential purpose. I look forward to seeing WFUNA thrive in the years ahead, playing a leadership role in strengthening connections between the United Nations and the emerging global civil society.