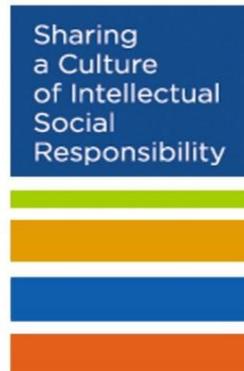




UNAI NEWSLETTER



October-December 2015

United Nations Academic Impact at Five: “The Next Generation of Global Citizens”



On 18 November 2015, United Nations Academic Impact turned five. The anniversary was observed on 10 November in the ECOSOC chamber at the United Nations Headquarters in New York with a high level event that included participation of the Secretary-General’s Chef de Cabinet, Susana Malcorra, who delivered a message on behalf of the Secretary-General.

There were two panel discussions focusing on UNAI and global citizenship and global citizenship and the Sustainable Development Goals. Attendees included the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Ambassador Oh Joon and Deputy Permanent Representative, Ambassador Hahn Choonghee; Chief Executive Officer of ELS Educational Services Inc., Mr. Mark Harris; and Chancellor of the State University of New York, Dr. Nancy Zimpher. The webcast of the event can be seen at <http://bit.ly/1Jf0QgD>.

Let the Creek Run!

A student initiative to reclaim a riverine ecosystem



The Lalaji Memorial Omega International School in India is currently undertaking a regeneration project of a creek which is the

flagship of Omega ASPIRE. Students from Class VIII onwards are involved in the multiyear mission to transform the polluted water body into a breathing ecosystem with bees, butterflies, bats, birds and small mammals.

The overarching objective is to restore the creek to its natural state using phytoremediation. Phytoremediation is a cost effective and environmentally sustainable method that takes advantage of a plant’s ability to concentrate elements and compounds from the polluted area and metabolize the various molecules in their tissue.

Plants that flourish in the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest belt of Chennai were selected, and a nursery of native samplings were planted on campus. The first phase of planting 198 trees and shrubs was accomplished by November 2015, eleven months after government approval, and just in time for the northeast monsoon. In a symbolic gesture, the *Ficus religiosa*, a tree of great significance in India and in some countries was the

first planted. It was under its canopy that Sage Gautama attained Buddhahood.

Looking into the future of the project, Lalaji Memorial Omega International School are aiming to incorporate a butterfly garden, a small island in the creek, a bridge across the two sides and a walkable path along both banks.

COP21: Nations Reach Historic Agreement on Climate Change

On 12 December 2015, 195 nations adopted an historic, legally binding agreement to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future. The Paris agreement for the first time brings all nations into a common cause based on their historic, current and future responsibilities.

The overarching aim of the agreement is to limit temperature rise in this century to two degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The 1.5 degrees Celsius limit is a significantly safer defence line against the worst impacts of a changing climate. Additionally, the agreement seeks to strengthen the ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

To reach these ambitious and important goals, appropriate financial flows will be put in place that will help developing and the most vulnerable take stronger action against climate change in line with their own national objectives.

“The Paris Agreement allows each delegation and group of countries to go back home with their heads held high. Our collective effort is worth more than the sum of our individual effort. Our responsibility to history is immense,” said Laurent Fabius, President of the COP 21 UN Climate change conference and Foreign Minister of France.

“We have entered a new era of global cooperation on one of the most complex issues ever to confront humanity,” noted UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. “For the first time, every country in the world has pledged to curb

emissions, strengthen resilience and join in common cause to take common climate action. This is a resounding success for multilateralism.”

As well as setting a long-term direction, countries will peak their emissions as soon as possible and continue to submit national climate action plans that detail their future objectives to address climate change. This builds on the momentum of the unprecedented effort which has so far seen 188 countries contribute climate action plans to the new agreement, which will dramatically slow the pace of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The new agreement also establishes the principle that future national plans will be no less ambitious than existing ones, which means these 188 climate action plans provide a firm floor and foundation for higher ambition.

Countries will submit updated climate plans – called nationally determined contributions (NDCs) – every five years, thereby steadily increasing their ambition in the long-term.

Climate action will also be taken forward in the period before 2020. Countries will continue to engage in a process on mitigation opportunities and will put added focus on adaptation opportunities. Additionally, they will work to define a clear roadmap on ratcheting up climate finance to USD 100 billion by 2020.

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement by the COP (Conference of the Parties), it will be deposited at the UN in New York and be opened for one year for signature on 22 April 2016-- Mother Earth Day.

The agreement will enter into force after 55 countries that account for at least 55% of global emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification.

The Second Annual J. Michael Adams Lecture and Conversation Series



On 30 October 2015, United Nations staff and delegates and university researchers and students gathered for the second annual J. Michael Adams Lecture and Conversation Series, featuring retired U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering and his reflections

on the past and future of the United Nations.

Deputy-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson aptly introduced Ambassador Pickering as “a living legend of American and international diplomacy.” Following three years as an officer in the United States Navy from 1956 till 1959, Thomas Pickering embarked upon a career with the U.S. Foreign Service. Throughout the following fifty years, Ambassador Pickering would hold a myriad of diplomatic appointments, including Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs under the Clinton Administration, and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, Nigeria, El Salvador, Israel, India, and the Russian Federation. During his tenure as U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN from 1989 to 1992, Ambassador Pickering played a pivotal role in shaping the Security Council’s response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and the First Gulf War. In the year 2000, Pickering retired with the rank of Career Ambassador, the highest within the U.S. Foreign Service.

In his address to attendees of the J. Michael Adams Series, Ambassador Pickering brought to bear his intimate familiarity with the art of diplomacy within and beyond the UN. Describing the Organization as “old home”, Ambassador Pickering began his lecture by highlighting three global developments that have forced the UN to radically evolve since its inception in 1945: namely, the globalization of technology, the increasing interconnectivity of the international political economy and the elevated costs of military action associated with weapons of mass destruction.

In light of this increasing interdependence, Ambassador Pickering urged the United Nations and its Member States to respond to global

challenges – be they financial crises, rural poverty or regional rivalries – with peaceful collective action, particularly those of an economic nature.

“We are challenged... to put the international community further in the center of the kind of cooperation that is required to help stabilize, manage and recover from banking, financial and other shocks,” said the Ambassador. “And I’m not sure that we have the institutional methods and mechanisms ready to move that.”

Perhaps the most piquant portion of the address was Ambassador Pickering’s advice on how the international community should respond to a number of salient debates. The seasoned diplomat encouraged the UN to approach the Syrian conflict with multilateral efforts to create a transitional government; to enumerate and demand minimum international standards to be met by any Israeli-Palestinian treaty; and to elect the next Secretary-General of the Organization based on merit, accomplishment and demonstrated attention to the needs of all Member States.

“I really believe it’s time to elect a woman,” added Ambassador Pickering, prompting a round of applause from audience members. “I want to see the men out there clapping.”

The event concluded with a question-and-answer session in which civil servants, UN staff members, scholars and university students asked the retired Ambassador to share his views on a number of current challenges to the work of the United Nations, including breaking down silos within institutions and the limitations of the international community to encroach upon sovereign nations at war.

Ambassador Pickering’s lecture constituted the second installment of the annual J. Michael Adams Lecture and Conversation Series. The initiative – whose inaugural address was delivered by eminent Saudi Arabian scientist Dr. Hayat Sindi in 2014 – engages renowned scholars in a discussion with the United Nations community on a topic of global significance. The series honors the life and work of the late Dr. J. Michael Adams, who leveraged his position as president of Fairleigh Dickinson University to forge ties between the United Nations and academic institutions. Under his

leadership, Fairleigh Dickinson became the first university in the world to earn Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the first member of United Nations Academic Impact.

By UN Department of Public Information Special Events Intern, Rocio Labrador.

UNAI Web Series on Food Security



25 September was a historic day at the United Nations because the [Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#) were adopted by UN Member States. UN Academic Impact is launching a new series of articles that take a closer look at what is being done, and what can be done, by environmental science research institutions and schools to advance Global Goal 2: "[Zero Hunger](#)" and Global Goal 3: "[Climate Action](#)."

Each week UNAI will post an article that looks at an important aspect of food security and climate change. This introduction to the series from UN Academic Impact intern Laura Phillips explains the important role of climate change action and sustainable agriculture in achieving the Global Goals:

Achieving food security in the post-2015 Development Agenda

As we move towards a population of 9-10 billion people by 2050, ensuring food security for the global population poses an enormous challenge. Simultaneously, we must limit temperature increase by 2 °C above preindustrial levels. The increase in food production must come through a change in the way we manage our land. We also need to improve the resilience of food production to future environmental change, protect biodiversity, protect our freshwater resource,

move to healthier diets, and reduce the adverse impacts of food production on the whole range of ecosystem services.

Following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in September and the adoption of the COP21 agreement in Paris in December, the synergistic relationship between food security and climate change is crucial to sustainable development, and achieving these goals.

Given that the need to feed a growing population and trying to avoid the dangerous effects of climate change are two of the greatest challenges facing humanity today, and in the future, United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) has requested a number of schools and departments specialising in food security and climate at UNAI member institutions to submit articles highlighting research and work focusing on different aspects of food security, nutrition security, climate change, land use change and the subsequent effects and suggested solutions in relation to the SDG's and the outcome of COP21.

Each week, an article from climate change and food security researchers across the world will be posted on the UN Academic Impact website.

UN 70 – Turn the World UN Blue



On 24 October, more than 350 iconic monuments, buildings, bridges, and other landmarks in nearly 85 countries were illuminated blue, the official colour of the United Nations, as part of a global campaign to commemorate UN Day and the 70th anniversary of the United Nations.

World famous landmarks from Australia's Sydney Opera House to the Great Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, from the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro to the Empire State Building in New York, were lit blue. Other participants included the Great Wall of China, Russia's Hermitage Museum, the ancient city of Petra in Jordan, the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, Edinburgh Castle and Central Hall Westminster in the United Kingdom, Japan's

SkyTree Tower and the Alhambra in Spain, among many others.

The global celebration kicked off at the UN Headquarters in New York, followed by New Zealand and then Australia, and from there a wave of UN blue moved across countries and continents and monuments around the world took part in the event.

UNAOC Call for application for the Youth Event for our Global Forum in Baku

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) invites young people from around the world who are members of youth led organizations/networks/initiatives to apply to the Youth Event at the 7th UNAOC Global Forum in Baku on April 25-27, 2016. The event, entitled *Living Together in Inclusive Societies* is an amazing opportunity for participants to interact with key stakeholders, experts and other youth involved in social action and to contribute to shaping the global narrative on social inclusion.

Youth aged 18 to 35 are invited to apply on the UNAOC [website](#) before January 17, 2016. The application guidelines are also available on the same website. Up to 150 youth from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds with outstanding track records in intercultural dialogue and youth work will be selected. More information is available in the [press release](#).

We kindly ask all interested parties to disseminate this information in their networks. Learn more about the UNAOC at www.unaoc.org.

Call for applications for our Many Languages, One World Student Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum

On 25-31 July, 2016, 60 students will be selected as delegates to the 2016 United Nations Academic Impact Global Youth Forum where they will create action plans related to the UN 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development. The students will present these plans at the UN Headquarters in New York.

To participate, write an original essay (2000 words) discussing global citizenship and cultural understanding and the role that multilingual ability can play in fostering these. Essays must be written in an official language of the United Nations that is not your first or primary language of instruction during your primary or secondary education. The official United Nations languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. See more information at:

<http://www.els.edu/en/ManyLanguagesOneWorld>

Upcoming Events

27 January: [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust](#)

20 February: [World Day of Social Justice](#)

21 February: [International Mother Language Day](#)

1 March: [Zero Discrimination Day](#)

3 March: [World Wildlife Day](#)

8 March: [International Women's Day](#)

21 March: [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#)

21 March: [International Day of Forests](#)

22 March: [World Water Day](#)

23 March: [World Meteorological Day](#)

25 March: [International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade](#)

7 April: [World Health Day](#)

12 April: [International Day of Human Space Flight](#)

22 April: [International Mother Earth Day](#)

24-30 April: [World Immunization Week](#)

26 April: [World Intellectual Property Day](#)

News and Media

Learn more about UN International Days on the [United Nations website](#).

United Nations Television (UNTV) produces award-winning programmes covering the wide range of issues addressed by the United Nations system of organizations for broadcast and online viewing. These programmes may be used to anchor lessons, to launch classroom discussions or to introduce panel presentations. Some of them are currently in use in classes and in textbooks for language and business courses.



21st Century monthly news magazine

<http://bit.ly/1VlLpHy>

Programme No. 106: This episode is dedicated to marking the United Nations' 70th anniversary and includes an in-studio interview with Ian Martin, Executive Director of the influential publication Security Council Report.



UN in Action short feature series

<http://bit.ly/1YN4h8j>

- The UN Secretaries-General: Through the Lens of Two Photographers (5'18") (#1487)
- Central African Republic: The Forgotten Crisis (5'01") (#1488)
- Concerto for Uniting Nations (4'53") (#1489)
- Republic of the Congo: A Garden for Hope (5'13") (#1490)

UN Audio Channels App for Mobile

The UN Audio Channels app (for [iOS](#) and [Android](#)) gives you access to live audio from UN General Assembly and Security Council meetings as well as the daily news and weekly programmes from UN Radio.

Why join UNAI

We welcome new members to UNAI. Find out some of the benefits of membership here:

- a. It is a global network of schools of higher learning and research, now comprising over 1,000 members in some 120 countries. As a collaborative platform, UNAI members learn from each other and enhance each other's skills and tools.
- b. As a member, you will have direct access to the United Nations Academic Impact, an initiative of the UN Secretary-General, and be able to use United Nations resources.
- c. You will be able to use the logo of the United Nations Academic Impact on your website and in promotional materials, thus raising your institution's visibility and international profile.
- d. You will be able to request assistance in connection with any activity in support of UNAI.
- e. You and your students can join, either in person or via the internet, in "Classroom Conversations" organized by UNAI at UN Headquarters.
- f. You can request briefings/interactive presentations on UN themes by United Nations experts.
- g. As a member, you are required to submit a periodic activity report, which is then uploaded on the UNAI website. As your activities become better known among UNAI global membership and beyond, your institution's international profile enhances.

Sounds interesting? Find out more at academicimpact.un.org