

# Newsletter

## United Nations Association

San Francisco

UN-Day 2014



### A Christmas Present from the White House

The news that US President Barack Obama has announced a new beginning of diplomatic relations with **Cuba** after more than 50 years is a welcome Christmas present for many. For a few contrarians it comes as another mistake made by the White House; these nay-sayers frankly do not know how to react and can only find excuses, not reasons, to be opposed.

The decision to change policies between the two nations is a great sign that there is hope for peace and understanding between them. It is also an example how world leaders can make a difference and change the course of history for the betterment of the global family. There is much to be gained by this decision and much to be learned by those who fail to give an opportunity to diplomacy, understanding, optimism and hope.

Many families will now have the opportunity to reunite, share and move into the future with a much different outlook on life. The future of many is about to change. The hope for peace is now a reality.

The courage necessary to make decisions like this is remarkable when we realize how powerful opposition and negativism has seemed. I am

encouraged to rediscover that we as humans can actually change for the better. The realization that leaders can find the solutions and work out differences to bring us closer to peace is magnificent.

Could it be that other countries are in the President's plans? Crazy thoughts that peace is possible may be "what the doctor ordered".

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
Pablo Castro,  
President, UNA USA SF

### A Stronger United Nations for a Better World

By: Hossein Kamali

Ban Ki-moon took office as the eighth UN Secretary-General on 23 January 2007 and will continue to serve until 31 December 2016. Under the theme "**A stronger United Nations for a Better World**" he listed **UN challenges** and declared his priorities along with the guiding

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principles for action, including:

- **Serve as a forum to set a global agenda;**
- **Play the role of honest broker;**
- **keep fighting partners apart;**
- **Help bring justice to those discriminated against;**

The Secretary-General said: ***“I am determined that we make progress on the pressing issues of our time.”***

On Wednesday 24 September 2014, the newly renovated UN General Assembly Hall opened its doors to the world leaders and Heads of State representing 200 nations at the UN HQ in New York. At the opening session, Ban Ki-moon said: “This year, the horizon of hope is darkened. Our hearts are made very heavy by unspeakable acts and the deaths of innocents.” *The UN Chief continued, saying “It has been a terrible year for the principles of the United Nations Charter. From barrel bombs to beheadings, from the deliberate starvation of civilians to the assault on hospitals, U.N. shelters and aid convoys, human rights and the rule of law are under attack. Diplomacy is on the defensive, undermined by those who believe in violence.”*



**The renovated UN General Assembly Hall**

Speaking of recent events, Ban Ki-moon said: “after the latest tragedy in Gaza, Palestinians and Israelis seem more polarized than ever. **“If**

**we do not save the two-state solution, we will be left in a state of permanent hostilities”.**

On a similar event in 2009, Miguel d'Escoto, Brockman, President of UN General Assembly, concerning Gaza conflict, stressed that the **international community should not remain “silent”** and warned that **a ceasefire in Gaza would not be permanent unless the root causes were fully addressed.**

History is repeating itself<sup>1</sup>. The world has witnessed the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the killing of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims and the expulsion of nearly 30,000 civilians in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. Unfortunately, the Security Council resolution 819 and the presence of the UN Military Protection Force failed to prevent the Srebrenica Massacre.

### **The need for a genuine UN-US partnership**

The world has changed since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, while the Security Council structure, its power and decision-making procedures remain unchanged. Perhaps the time has come to initiate restructuring of the UN's top decision-making body? In his opening remarks at the UN General Assembly, President Obama stated: **“we come together to reaffirm the founding vision of this Institution.”** We come together with a choice to make. “We choose hope over fear. We see the future not as something out of our control” “There's much to be done to meet the test of the moment, **a test that only the United Nations** -- an international community working together -- can choose to overcome”. At the heart of that test – at the root of the world's challenges -- are two defining questions:

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<sup>1</sup> **Winston Churchill said” those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it”**



President Obama addressing UN General Assembly  
September 24, 2014

Can the U.N. renew the purpose of its founding? And will the international community come together to reject the cancer of violent extremism? President Obama said during his election campaign, "No country has a greater stake in a strong United Nations than the United States."

Yes, it is the United States as a world power with dominant influence in the UN that in a genuine partnership with the United Nations could play a vital role in strengthening the UN capacity and the Security Council in particular to deal with global challenges. To this end, a strong effective relationship between the United States and the United Nations is crucial to empower the Security Council to carry out its functions towards a secure and peaceful world

### The UN Charter

Sir Humphrey Waldok, the president of the International Court of justice once stated in his Hague lecture in 1962, "The UN Charter is technically a multilateral treaty between states," setting forth the power and functions of the organs and the rights and duties of member states. As Humphrey indicated, in a larger sense the Charter provides "the constitutional framework of international law." It proclaims fundamental principles of law for the world Community.

Ban Ki-moon was sworn in as the 8<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General on Dec 14, 2006. He was re-elected by the General Assembly on 21 June 2011 to a second term, and took the oath by placing his hand on the original UN Charter. Six months after he took office, Ban Ki-moon traveled to San Francisco, the birthplace of the United Nations. On 26 July 2007, to mark the 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter, Ban Ki-moon spoke on the stage of War Memorial Building where the UN Charter had been signed. Here he said: "I feel honored and very humbled, when I think of all our founding fathers wise enough and courageous enough to save this world from the scourge of war, who have negotiated, drafted and finally signed the Charter of the United Nations, which has shaped the future of the whole international community."

### The Security Council

The issue of the Security Council reform and expansion has been under consideration for a long time. There's need for a democratic and impartial decision making body aimed at a) reducing political pressures that block Council



Ban-Ki-moon at the War Memorial Building on his left, Bill Luers, UNA-USA President  
Photo: UN News center

resolutions, b) initiating preventive diplomacy to avoid conflicts; and c) facilitating the process of war crime prosecution.

To this end, the General Assembly may initiate establishing a high-level international independent commission to conduct a needs

assessment of the Security Council. This includes its current composition, decision making procedures and the expansion of the Council membership, based on geographical representation. For instance, extra permanent seats to be granted each from a different region including Germany, Brazil, India, a seat for Africa (Nigeria or South Africa) and Japan. Any revision to the UN Charter<sup>2</sup>, however, requires a vote of two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly to be ratified by two thirds of the UN members including all permanent members of the Security Council.

Dear Secretary-General, Under your leadership, significant global progress has been made in achieving the Millennium Goals (MDGs); fighting poverty and disease, child mortality; creating the UN Women via the General Assembly to empower women, initiating Sustainable Energy for All, and putting climate change on the world agenda; in campaigning for human rights; helping refugees-displaced people, and most recently by dealing with Ebola crisis.

Your Excellency, There's great expectation placed on the United Nations. You pledged to lead the world body as "a harmonizer and bridge-builder" and stated that "The unity of the Security Council is crucial." As the chief administrative officer of the Organization and the world's top diplomat you are in a position to take the lead initiating global partnership in support of the UN principles, building confidence and friendly relations among member states. Please use your last years in Office to undertake global preventive diplomacy to deal with crises that might lead to conflicts, maintain UN impartiality and reestablish the credibility and effectiveness of the world's foremost world organization for peace..



## Thoughts from the President of UNA San Francisco

On December 10<sup>th</sup> we observed Human Rights Day. Many around the world had events to celebrate and discuss what our world is going through. But it seems that we only discussed issues for one day, then, we went back to our normal lives. A few in California kept marching on the streets, even stopped traffic on highways to protest the treatment of black people by police.

I wish we had more time to discuss violations of human rights and what we can do to make the world understand how important it is that we respect each other, respect the rights of people of color, the rights of women and children, the rights of parents and the elderly, even the rights of students and people who are just different.

We should discuss what it would take to spread respect for those precious rights that everyone on this earth deserves and is entitled to. Like the right to education, the right to work, the right to equal treatment under the law, the rights of people with disabilities and even the rights to clean water.

It is apparent that the word is not getting to everyone. It seems that it only circulates among people who are affected by these violations. Those who are not touched by abuses just continue living and as long as things do not come too close to them they show no interest; they either ignore the concept or it has no importance to them.

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<sup>2</sup> Article 108 of the United Nations Charter

I must insist that the answer is to build the proper education systems and be practiced around the world. All the children of this world should be taught in school that those human rights exist for everyone and not just a few. Of course, we should also educate adults; some of them still ignore the rights of women that most members of



My grand kid, a UN advocator

the United Nations agreed to respect. There is much to discuss and learn for the human race and we are doing it, but unfortunately very slowly; too slow for me.

The United Nations through various programs educates people about these issues and much more. However, the resources needed to accomplish so many UN goals are often reduced by states who fail to pay their dues. Sometimes funds are cut or reduced for political reasons rather than for lack of funds. The results could mean that thousands of refugees that UN takes care of could go hungry and sick. Let us hope that we can make more progress in 2015. The more we advance in learning the happier and peaceful the world can be.

## Cities for CEDAW Campaign

By Bronwyn Kay Galloway, JD/MA  
Chair, UNA-SF Women's Committee  
November 20, 2014



The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**) is a **United Nations treaty** adopted in 1979, also known as the "**international bill of rights for women.**" It consists of a preamble and 30 articles, defining what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. It has been ratified by 186 of 193 UN member states worldwide. While the United States is a signatory to the treaty, it is the only industrialized nation and one of the seven (7) member states that has failed to ratify CEDAW along with Iran, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Palau and Tonga.

Consultative to the United Nations is Women's Intercultural Network (WIN), working closely with **UNA-SF's Women's Committee** on the Cities for CEDAW (C4C) Campaign. WIN created C4C to promote the adoption of CEDAW as a municipal ordinance in cities large and small in order to create a framework for improving the status of women and girls. Thus far, five (5) cities have adopted CEDAW: San Francisco (in 1998); Berkeley; Los Angeles; Portland, Oregon; and just on November 18, 2014 Louisville, Kentucky.

**San Francisco** became the first municipality in the world to adopt a local **CEDAW** ordinance, inspired by the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women ("Action for Equality, Development and Peace") in Beijing, China which produced an agenda for women's empowerment called the Platform for Action, involving 12 objectives of critical concern: 1) Women and Poverty, 2) Education and Training of Women, 3) Women and Health, 4) Violence against Women, 5) Women and Armed Conflict,

6) Women and the Economy, 7) Women in Power and Decision-making, 8) Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women, 9) Human Rights of Women, 10) Women and the Media, 11) Women and the Environment, and 12) The Girl-child. The ninth objective “**Human Rights of Women**” asks for the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially CEDAW.

The campaign goal is for a total of 100 U.S. cities to adopt a CEDAW measure by December 2015. It strives to push the U.S. itself to ratify a treaty it already signed. For more information including a toolkit, visit the Cities for CEDAW website at [citiesforcedaw.org](http://citiesforcedaw.org).



### **UN 69th, UN 70th and the UNA Gender Crosstalk initiative** By: Roger Eaton, Chair, Communications

The UNA-SF partnered with its own **UNA SF Bay Area Council of Organizations** and the Unitarian-Universalist United Nations Organization in San Francisco to put on a gratifying UN 69th Celebration at the UU Church on Franklin St in San Francisco, Sunday Oct 19, 2014. Over one hundred people participated in a luncheon with a panel presentation and 13 tables of conversation on as many topics under the heading “Taking Action for Human and Environmental Rights”.

Looking ahead we can foresee an exciting **UN 70th Celebration in 2015**. We have an Oct 24, 2015 UN Day reservation for the War Memorial where the UN Charter was signed in June 1945, a good start on building a team, a successful UN 69th just behind us, and we have our Gender Crosstalk technology as a wildcard that could be

the difference between a modest and a grand UN 70th.

We are hoping to secure the participation of the Executive Director of UN Women as our keynote. While by no means a done deal, we do have a solid connection to her through a locally headquartered global women’s organization, and, as a second avenue of approach, we are planning to include her in our Gender Crosstalk start-up.

The UNA Gender Crosstalk Initiative aims to build global solidarity based on gender equality. We will begin by sending two messages to the Executive Director of UN Women, one from the participating women and one from the men. These messages will go out in February in time for International Women’s Day, 2015. Each month thereafter two more messages will be “elected” in a suspenseful dialogue between the genders, a dialog that will weave a tale of love and wit! The Crosstalk will naturally bring forth a nonviolent global citizens movement (GCM) that will take political control of humanity’s future, and it will do so with a minimum of fuss and a maximum of kindness and intelligence. Stay tuned! If we can put these pieces together, we are in for an exhilarating ride.

### **UN Educational Exhibition “Strengthening UN-San Francisco Relationship”**

A three-day UN Educational Exhibition under the theme “**Strengthening the UN-San Francisco Relationship**” was hosted by **YMCA<sup>3</sup> Buchanan** from April 13, 2014 in San Francisco. The event aimed at educating the public about the history of the United Nations and the origin of the UN charter, focusing on the Nations relationship with its birthplace, San Francisco. The Exhibition provided a unique opportunity to connect the UNA-SF with the local community and the youth in particular. The United Nations and YMCA have some common goals and are actively engaged in areas such as Human Rights, and the status of women and Youth.

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See;YMCA Buchanan photos in UNASF last newsletter



**A group photo of the Japanese YMCA taken before World War II, Bay Region, April 1936**

**Source: YMCA Buchanan**

With respect to UN education, YMCA sponsors Model UN programs throughout the United States. California YMCA Youth and government for example, sponsored the annual Model UN summit for over 650 middle school students



in Irvine 2013. The program for 2015 MUN program is planned for February to June 2015. The World Alliance of YMCA, which cooperates with several UN specialized agencies, enjoys

consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The exhibit displayed historic documents, images and journals describing the creation of United Nations; UN efforts, challenges and achievements toward world Peace and security. Special charts and progress reports were also displayed on UN Millennium Declaration



**Rodney YMCA Buchanan Chief with some of his staff, hosting the Exhibit**



.Phase II of the event covered an **educational exhibit of African Culture and Art with a focus on West Africa**. The Exhibit aimed at raising awareness of UN development programs in African Continent. Posters and hand-outs demonstrated the **Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade** and its impact on the American visitors. The interests shown and feedback from the visitors was encouraging indeed.



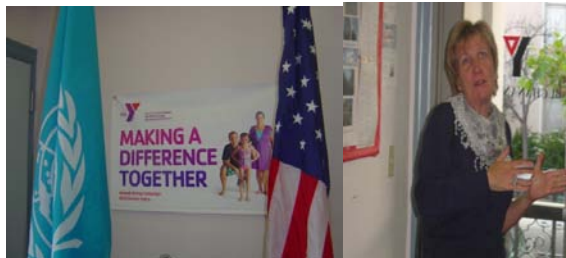
An area of the African Culture Exhibit



A group of visitors attending the Exhibition



Among many visitors to the UN Exhibit



Rodney Chin, YMCA Buchanan Executive in a letter to UNA-SF President wrote: In partnership with the United Nations Association of San Francisco (UNA-SF), it was an honor to host the United Nations Educational Exhibit, “Strengthen U.N-S.F. Relationship”, at the Buchanan YMCA starting on April 11, 2014. The opening reception was attended by YMCA members, guests, and members and friends of the United Nations Association of San Francisco.

The theme of this exhibit was “Education is the engine of Human Development”. A big thanks to Houssein Kamali for putting together the exhibit. It was originally going to be displayed for a few weeks, but because of the many positive feedbacks and thought provoking conversations from those viewing the exhibit; we kept it up for the entire month of May.

I was thrilled to have the exhibit at the Buchanan YMCA as it was a very educational exhibit that our community benefited from. The United Nations had its beginnings in San Francisco which is a little known fact, and the War Memorial building where the UN Charter was signed is only a mile away from the Buchanan YMCA.

**Why Africa Matters**  
**US-Africa Leaders Summit**  
 by Hossein Kamali



Five years ago, I wrote an article entitled “**It’s Time for a Genuine US-UN partnership with Africa**”, which appeared in the [UNA-SF Courier](#), winter 2009 edition. Based on 2010 Census, there are 40 million African-Americans or 12.3 percent of the US population.



President Clinton's historic trip to Africa in 1998, and the subsequent US-Africa Business Forum in Washington and the visits by African leaders to the United States, anticipated a new chapter in the US-Africa relationship.

Africa is a fast growing diverse Continent with great potential opportunities, which, the United States had not taken full advantage to initiate engagement with the Continent. This policy was in part because the United States did not consider Africa strategically attractive. But the increased activities of China in Africa, as the greatest partner, and gaining influence over the Continent has given the US concern.



African heads of state and top officials at the US-Africa Summit, Washington D.C.

President Obama's two visits to Africa<sup>4</sup> since he took office have raised hope and great expectations among Africans toward US-Africa relations, but not much happened since then. While visiting Ghana, president Obama said "I've come here to Ghana for a simple reason: The 21st century

<sup>4</sup> Cape Coast Castle or the House of Slaves visited by President Obama, was the first slave trading port in Africa, built in 1653. It is also called Slave holes, where hundreds of thousands of slaves were brought to the coast, kept in slave dungeons, and passed through the "Door of No return". The captured slaves chained together awaiting their shipment to the New World. pp 13-16 **Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**, "Encounters in West Africa, Trafford Publishing, Canada 2001, and USA, 2007, by Hossein Kamali.

will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra, as well. So I do not see the countries and peoples of Africa as a world apart; I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world."

As a follow up of his visits to Africa, President Obama convened the largest ever US-Africa Leader Summit welcoming some 50 African leaders and Heads of State along with US top officials in Washington DC from 4-6 August 2014.



President Obama visiting Cape Coast, Accra-Ghana

The US-Africa Summit theme, "Investing in the Next generation," held extensive consultations on a wide range of topics aimed at strengthening ties between the United States and Africa. The topics included shared interest in increased US-Africa trade and investment in Africa and, highlighted America's commitment to Africa's security. Bill Clinton, former US President, moderated the US-Africa Business Forum. The Summit also convened a day-long Spousal Program hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama and former First Lady, Laura Bush with a focus on education. The top US government officials and business community engagement at the Summit was an evidence of the growing concern of Obama administration with respect to the importance of hosting this US-Africa Summit in DC.

## **UNDP<sup>5</sup> Washington Representation Office Deputy Director, Jérôme Sauvage Speaks to UNA-USA in San Francisco**

To help celebrate the 69th United Nations Day on the west coast of the United States, Jerome Sauvage, Deputy Director for the Washington Representation Office, was invited to speak to the United Nations Association (UNA) of the USA in the San Francisco Bay area. The location is significant as the San Francisco Conference – formally referred to as the United Nations Conference on International Organization – took place there between 25 April and 26 June 1945, resulting in the establishment of the United Nations.

In Sacramento, the UNA and Physicians for Social Responsibility co-organized a well-attended and engaging event with over 200 people – of which at least one-third were below 35 years of age – participating. Additionally, in spite of a very close re-election campaign, Congressman Ami Berra (7th District) stopped in to briefly participate.

With the San Francisco East Bay UNA Chapter, UN Day was celebrated on Sunday, 26 October at the University of California, Berkeley. Competing with the World Series Game 5, the event was still attended by over 250 people – many of whom were young, engaged and well-informed students. The event included messages from the UNA's Executive Director, Chris Whatley, and Senator Barbara Lee. It also

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<sup>5</sup> UNDP, is a key player in international development, including the center of UN's efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNDP Washington Representation acts as a liaison with the US government, diplomatic and business communities, including the US Congress, media, and NGOs, advocating support for UNDP's global programs in development.

served as a forum for UNA to provide three awards to Civil Society Organizations

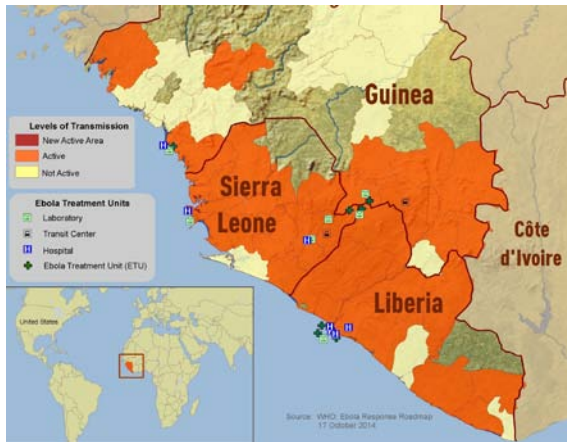


**Jennifer Wagner, UNA-SF Vice President,  
in conversation with Jerome Sauvage,  
San Francisco, Oct 27, 2014**

(International Rescue Committee, Western States Legal Foundation and Non-Violent Peace Forum), each with explicit ties to the UN. Sauvage presented well-received keynote addresses to both audiences, focusing upon the very discussed and timely Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. Specifically, he presented the new challenges the world faces in terms of development such as climate change and income inequality and lack of inclusivity

### **EBOLA Crisis**

Ebola is a deadly disease or “Silent Death”, Its virus spreads through human to human transmission. Symptoms starts with a fever, sore throat, muscle pain, headache and vomiting. West Africa is amongst the poorest in the world. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa are most affected by Ebola virus. Ban Ki-moon told the UN Special Session on Ebola crisis: “There Is overwhelming momentum for the UN to play a leading role in coordinating a ramped-up emergency response”.



**Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea  
West Africa**

**Source: WHO October 2014**

President Obama said "Ebola is more than a health emergency" and called it a "growing threat to regional and global security."

The Emergency Session of the UN Security Council, consider the Ebola outbreaks in West Africa as a threat to international security. United Nations plays a crucial role in helping West African Countries fight Ebola. The World Health Organization (WHO) while estimating over 7000 deaths warned that it could take months to bring the epidemic under control.

**G77 and its role in  
the United Nations System**



There are five regional groups within the UN System, which, include: Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean Western Group. G77 or Group of 77 of developing countries is the largest Intergovernmental Organization within the UN

system. The G-77 was established on 15 June 1964 by the "Joint Declaration of Seventy-Seven Developing Countries" issued at the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva. The first Ministerial Meeting of G77 held in Algeria October 1967, adopted the Charter of Algiers which led to the creation of the Group of 77 with Liaison offices in Geneva (UNCTAD), Nairobi (UNEP), Paris (UNESCO), Rome (FAO/IFAD), Vienna (UNIDO), and the Group of 24 (G-24) in Washington, D.C. (IMF and World Bank).

The G77, comprising 133 countries commemorated its Fiftieth Anniversary at the UN headquarters in Vienna from June 24 to June 27, 2014. At this event, Guests enjoyed traditional music, food and dances. Cultural performances were presented by African and Asian countries, including Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Qatar, Oman, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

**The Structure of G77**

A Chairman acts as the G77 spokesman, and coordinates the Group's action in each Chapter.



**Vienna International Centre (VIC)**, hosts numerous UN organizations including International Atomic Energy Agency(IAEA), UN Office in Vienna, UNIDO, UNHCR



Afghan musicians performed traditional music at the G77 event- Vienna

The Chairmanship, which is the highest political body, rotates on a regional basis (between Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean) and is held for one year.

The Group of 77 plays an instrumental role in the work of the United Nations. Its Annual Meeting of Foreign Affairs is convened at the regular session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. The Group of 77 initiates resolutions in the UN General Assembly and UN Specialized agencies, joint declarations, action programs and agreements on development issues.

## Message from the Editor

### Greetings!

The years come and go so fast. We are now approaching the end of the year and for many, this is the time to plan a **New Year's celebration**. Beside New Year celebration, I am looking for the day when we can all share joy and deal with problem- together without fear regardless of color, gender, race or belief. We, as a UNASF team are lucky to live in San Francisco, the birthplace of the United Nations, where the **UN Charter** delivered a message of hope for international values, human dignity, freedom and peace in 1945.

As members of UNA Association, It is our role, to support the UN and its global agenda as it deals with the challenges ahead for justice and peace. **We need the United Nations. It is the only global Organization on the front line fighting since 1945 for the international values we all desire: human dignity, freedom and peace.**

**Hossein Kamali**



# UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION *of the United States of America*

A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

## San Francisco Chapter Official Invitation to Join



The United Nations Association

San Francisco Chapter is inviting you to join-----Free for students



**Be Part of the UNA USA San Francisco.** You will be joining a group of Exciting volunteers who work receive the latest news about The world where you live and what many people are doing to save the planet at UN leve Great opportunity to learn about the United Nations. You will be inspired to learn more and give new ideas for the future on improving and preserving your planet Earth. Attend events and discuss advocacy for Women's Issues, global subjects like Climate Change, Human Rights, important conflicts and more.  
**Contact us at [UNA-SF.org](http://UNA-SF.org). Join up at [unausa.org/join](http://unausa.org/join).**