

# UNA-SF Courier



The voice of the United Nations Association of San Francisco • una-sf.org • Summer 2006

## Making a difference

Kim Weichel, President

As advocates for the UN we need to know some of the many positive stories of the ongoing work of the UN, and to speak with others about the extraordinary impact the UN is making on people's lives. As the UN and global affairs correspondent for the *Positive Spin* TV show, I'm able to learn about some of these inspiring stories put out by UN in Action that we use on each segment. I would like to share several with you.



- Facing a 55% literacy rate, teachers in Morocco need basic resources and up-to-date information to educate more Moroccans and raise the literacy rate in the Kingdom. UNESCO, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, has joined forces with ITU, the International Telecommunications Union, to introduce electronic instruction via satellite technology for teachers > 5

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The City College  
of San Francisco offers

## The United Nations in 2000 and beyond

Jay Sayed, instructor • Course IDST 7

**Wednesdays beginning Aug. 16**

7:00 to 9:30 pm, open to the public  
CCSF, 50 Phelan Avenue, San Francisco  
Cloud Hall, Room 201

Study of the structure and organization of the United Nations, the rationale for its existence, and an objective appraisal of its performance, together with a prognosis about its future as it faces some unique problems. This course is open to all on a credit or non-credit basis. Register through the CCSF Admission and Registration office, [ccsf.edu/AR/](http://ccsf.edu/AR/) or 415-239-3000. For a map see [ccsf.edu/Schedule/](http://ccsf.edu/Schedule/).

# Believe it or not!

By Jay Sayed

[Jay Sayed (UNcourse@yahoo.com) is a faculty member at the City College of San Francisco, where he teaches a course on the United Nations (page 1).]

Believe it or not, since July 16, 1945, at 5:29:45 am when a white blaze in New Mexico threw the world in the atomic weapons' race, the only organization of the world that has been capable of saving the world from 'annihilation' thus far, is the United Nations.

In that epoch-making event, the lightning of the blast was so blinding that, amazingly, it could be seen 120 miles away. It is true that we have seen a number of wars involving wanton bloodbaths during this time, but it is equally true that a conflict which could have triggered nuclear warheads has been averted only due to the existence and mediation of the UN.

The Arab-Israeli and India-Pakistan conflicts have brought us too close to such a devastating and deadly encounter on many occasions. There is no denying that there have been many setbacks and derelictions in this body of 191 sovereign states. At the same time, there have been victories achieved by this unique forum in which international peace and security have top priority.

While it is easy to point a finger of accusation against the UN, it requires imagination to appreciate its productive activity. The world should not forget the fateful outburst of Robert Lewis, the co-pilot of the B-29 bomber "Enola Gay" that dropped the first ever nuclear bomb on Hiroshima: "My God, what have we done?" As a consequence of the bombings, approximately 134,000 people lay dead in Hiroshima, and 64,000 in Nagasaki. The fallout effects of that horrific bombing are still causing diseases including cancer and other ailments.

While we have witnessed a remarkable growth of knowledge and many discoveries in the recent past, the trend toward weapons development also keeps spiraling upward. Sadly enough, to kill is human! And tragically enough, human nature has not changed.

History is a living testimony to the fact that man is the biggest enemy of man. The making of daggers, crossbows, gunpowder, and bombs are all human acts intended to overpower humans. Man came up with devices to kill his own kind—devices that a wild beast could never imagine. The cobra's venom and bestial violence are all surpassed by man's self-destructive inventions. His weapons succumb to almost nothing else but his own weapons and ingenuity in killing others. No natural calamity consciously premeditates plans to cause massacres and mayhem on the scale that humanity does to destroy its own species.

Dwight Eisenhower predicted more than a half a century ago that military-industrial complexes would be an

# A visit to WFUNA

Our immediate past president, Nancy L. Peterson, recently visited the headquarters of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) in Geneva, Switzerland. She spoke with the leader of the office, Deputy Secretary General Mrs. Bruna Faidutti, and her staff of four.

"Approximately 120 nations have United Nations Association chapters, of which about 60 are truly active," Ms. Faidutti said. "Russia and China are now quite active, as are Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada and the United States. Here we think of our work as encouraging a people's movement for the UN."

Nancy described the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations held in San Francisco last June. Geneva also marked the occasion. They discussed the need to expand membership, attract young members, observe UN holidays, and continue activities such as the Model UN and the UN Club. They also discussed the need for funding and staffing. Nancy told Ms. Faidutti of Chevron's generous gift of \$100,000 for UN60.

The Geneva secretariat of the UN is very large. "They actually have more staff there than they have in New York City. Thousands of conferences are held annually. The day I visited, the WFUNA staff was assisting in coordinating a conference on the new Human Rights Council." Nancy said. "I hadn't realized that the UN headquarters are actually housed in the former League of Nations building, though of course, more space has been added. Geneva is a sort of 'capital city' of world NGO headquarters. Approximately 37% of the city's population consists of international personnel who staff these organizations."

Ms. Faidutti spoke of her need to feel she was actually reaching the chapters. Nancy assured her of our interest in San Francisco in the coordination of the whole body of WFUNA.

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irreversible trauma against peace for the US and the world. His words were prophetic in 1960: "We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

Luckily, however, history is crowded with reformers and peacemakers who promise to eradicate the scourge of war and to bring about a lasting peace. Hence, believe it or not, organizations such as the United Nations and great leaders like Dag Hammarskjöld are present there too, to make their mark for peace, human rights, and international security. Our esteemed United Nations is a global village. It has come to stay, and stay with honor and for harmony without discrimination on the basis of color, creed, religion, or national origin. Long live the United Nations!

# Peace through education

Lawrence Wong

[Lawrence Wong is an elected member of the San Francisco Community College Board and a board member of UNA-SF.]

Global warming is not the only thing heating up the planet; increasing global military conflicts continue to heat up, destroying lives and futures. The United Nations was founded 61 years ago to foster cooperation between nations and resolve conflicts diplomatically, but it is ultimately only through education that the seeds for peace can be planted in our future generations.

On April 6, UNA-SF, the City College of San Francisco Institute for International Students, and the German Consulate General in San Francisco jointly hosted a reception for over 120 guests to hear from our next generation of ambassadors for peace.

City College of San Francisco, with over 110,000 students, has international students from over 90 countries – from Afghanistan to Zambia. Our goal at City College is not only to help our international students acquire an academic education in one of the most diverse cities in the United States, but is also to allow them to see how students from different ethnic groups and countries live and learn together.

The reception brought together the international community in San Francisco with over 20 consuls general in attendance at the German Consulate, with welcoming remarks from German Consul General Rolf Schuette, UNA-SF Past President Nancy Peterson, and City College Trustees Dr. Natalie Berg and Lawrence Wong.

City College Professor Jay Sayed spoke of his UN course (see pages 1 and 2) and his unwavering belief that the UN is the world's salvation as we continue to spiral into more tribal, sectarian conflicts and global terrorism.

Jette Winckler of the UNA Young Professionals for International Cooperation spoke of their efforts to carry their message to the next generation of young activists.

But it was the student speakers from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America that gave us all much-needed hope for the future. These students spoke of their personal struggles in coming to the US, their struggles with the language, and their gratitude to City College of San Francisco for the educational opportunities it offers. They spoke of their hope of returning to their countries, bringing with them all that they have learned—not the least being how they lived in such a diverse city with people coming together in common cause—yes, in San Francisco, the birthplace of the United Nations.

# UNA–East Bay urges restraint in MidEast

The following proposed statement has been sent to the UNA-USA Board of Directors for adoption by UNA-USA as an official public statement. It is adapted from the British UNA-UK recent letter to the British Foreign Secretary.

We urge the US government to initiate and support international efforts to reduce tension in the Israel-Lebanon region, particularly through the United Nations.

We acknowledge UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's call for an immediate end to the fighting between Israeli and Hezbollah forces, and for an international force which could insure the integrity of the international border between Israel and Lebanon.

We are deeply troubled by the assessment of Jan Egeland, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator presently in the region, that Lebanon faces a humanitarian crisis of catastrophic proportions, with more than 800,000 already-displaced and needy civilians.

UNA-USA considers that nothing can justify the firing of rockets into Israel, which have killed Israeli civilians; nor the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers; nor the disproportionate use of force by Israel in Gaza and Lebanon which has resulted in escalating numbers of civilian deaths and destruction of vital infrastructure.

We welcome and strongly support the bringing of humanitarian aid to the people throughout the region, and are confident that a re-established peace process, viable to Israel, Lebanon, and Palestine, will aid a sustainable crisis resolution.

Rita Maran and Ingeborg Nienhold,  
for the Board of Directors of the United Nations Association of the East Bay

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Please send mailing address corrections to UNA-USA, Membership Services office, 801 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017, or e-mail Heather Reine, [hreine@unausa.org](mailto:hreine@unausa.org).

# Educate, motivate, and activate!

## The Sustainable World Symposium and Festival

Lyndie Kahaneck [Member of the boards of directors of UNA-SF and UNA-NCD, and a co-producer of SWSF.]

The Sustainable World Symposium and Festival held on May 13 and 14 in San Francisco was a special opportunity for UNA-SF and other UNA local chapters to make new connections. UNA's Northern California Division (UNA-NCD) was the first sponsor lined up to support the dynamic event that featured 30 expert presenters, 65 exhibitor booths, live music and dance performances, films, eco-theater, and a youth program. The event's organizers aimed to set a high standard for a zero-waste and carbon-neutral production.

The symposium was produced by the Sustainable World Coalition, a nonprofit project of Earth Island Institute. It was designed to "Educate, Motivate, and Activate." First, the curriculum gave an A-to-Z overview of planetary vital signs, social and economic trends, and role models for workable solutions to global and local issues. The program focused on developing teamwork and making practical personal choices to help forward the sustainability movement (for examples, see the *2006 Sustainable World SourceBook*.)

Speakers included Randy Hayes, CEO of the International Forum on Globalization; Kevin Danaher, co-director of Global Exchange; Betsy Rosenberg, *Air America* radio host; Charles McGlashan, Marin County Supervisor; Hunter Lovins, founder and president of Natural Capital, Inc.; Lynne Twist, co-founder of Pachamama Alliance; Duane Elgin, author; and Darian Heyman, director of Craigslist Foundation.

UNA-NCD had a booth at the symposium and a Breakout Session on the Millennium Development Goals, facilitated by UNA East Bay President Herb Behrstock, who worked for UNDP for over 30 years, and Larry Levine, UNA Mid-Pacific Regional Director. UNA-SF provided significant assistance through the help of members Marike Bachrach as volunteer coordinator, and Jeff Ellingson and Jay Sayed helping with promotion. Thank you to everyone who helped and participated!

Each attendee received a *2006 Sustainable World SourceBook* (56-pages) depicting the most current authoritative research, positive role models, action steps, > 5

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## YPIC leads in DC

YPIC Leadership Skills workshops featured at annual UNA-USA conference

Jette Winckler

[The author is the national treasurer of UNA-USA Young Professionals for International Cooperation.]

The UNA-USA's Annual Meeting was held in Washington, DC at the Pan American Health Organizations (a regional office of the World Health Organization) from June 7 to 11. UNA members from around the country came together in the capital for intensive education on UN issues, advocacy training, sharing of best practices, and for networking and skills-building. More than 75 members of UNA-USA's Young Professionals in International Cooperation (YPIC) participated in the meeting, with partial scholarship support from the Ford Foundation and other sources.

This year's conference was an exciting one for the YPICs. For many of them it was their first experience lobbying Senators and Representatives in the Capitol. The Day of Advocacy, June 8, coincided with CARE International's annual Advocacy Outreach, so the halls of the congress were filled with hundreds of young

advocates who came prepared with substantive knowledge on UN and development issues to educate the political leaders.

Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown's strong words on US lack of commitment to the UN the previous day and the very aggressive response from US Ambassador John Bolton had produced an unusually high awareness in congressional offices about the state of UN affairs. It provided the UNA advocates with a unique chance to engage the political establishment in very concrete dialogue about the issues, opportunities, and challenges faced by the United Nations.

YPIC produced its first national YPIC Career Fair: Careers in International Affairs & Development. On Sunday, June 11, we launched a new effort through a full day of Leadership Skills Workshops offering training on Intergenerational Communications and Networking; Recruiting Young Professional Members to Chapters; Starting-up a YPIC Group using the YPIC Tool Kit; Budgeting and Managing Finances in Compliance with Nonprofit requirements; and Creating a Marketing and Public Relations effort to promote the UNA YPIC brand.

As National Treasurer, I had the opportunity to speak on how the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, as well as pending legislation on nonprofit fiscal management, have increased the need to train UNA board members in our chapters on their general fiduciary duties and responsibilities. In an increasingly more transparent environment that demands accountability in nonprofit management, it is essential for local chapters to have their conflict of interest policies and ethical conduct guidelines in place.

## < 4 Educate, motivate, and activate

and resources. It is concise. The attractive and concise book can be downloaded free from [swcoalition.org](http://swcoalition.org). For a printed copy, send \$7 (includes postage) to Sustainable World Coalition, 79 Sidney Court, San Rafael, CA 94903.

As supporters of the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals, educating ourselves about our personal impact on the planet is essential. Collectively, simple actions like reducing our intake of meat, buying organic local-grown foods, and using our automobiles less often can make a significant positive difference.

According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, —a global inventory conducted by a partnership of UN agencies, scientists, policy-makers and others from over 95 countries—approximately 60 percent of the planet's ecosystem services are currently being degraded by human activities. These activities have damaging effects ranging from pollution, including greenhouse gases, to over-harvesting of forests and fisheries. As Californians, we can demonstrate a model for sustainability that the rest of our country can emulate. Change happens one person at a time. *Vision plus Hope plus Collaborative Action equals Sustainable Change!*



Working together for a sustainable planet. Photo: Josh Miller

## < 1 Making a difference

Eleven thousand more teachers are scheduled for training, and 30,000 new schools will be built to offer education to students in remote areas.

- Cancer has long since been a scourge to people of poorer countries, who are deprived access to sophisticated technology to control it. Sri Lanka was one such afflicted country where now radiation therapy has newly stepped in, thanks to the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA is making available state-of-the-art radiotherapy equipment and specialized training to more than eighty countries globally, including Sri Lanka in order to aggressively attack the disease and help people survive it.

The United Nations Association  
of the United States of America—Northern California Division  
and the Stanford University School of Medicine,  
the Community Medical Center, and the UNA Film Festival  
present

# Can the UN heal the world?

Millennium Development Goals  
Conflicts and consequences  
The role of the UN

Saturday, October 7  
9:30 am–6:00 pm

Stanford Medical School, Fairchild Auditorium

### Speakers

**Carol Welch**, US coordinator, Millennium Goals Campaign

**Yvonne Maldonado, MD**, founder and director of the Stanford Infectious Diseases and Immunology Center

**Paul H. Wise, MD**, director of Social and Health Policy Research and Professor of Pediatrics, Boston University

**Daniel Sheehan, JD**, professor of World Politics and Legal Counsel in the Iran-Contra Case

**Christopher O'Sullivan, PhD**, professor of history and author of *The United Nations: A Concise History*

General Admission: \$35, Stanford students: \$5, other students: \$10

- Since 1945, the UN has assisted in negotiating more than 170 peace settlements that have ended regional conflicts. Examples include ending the Iran-Iraq war, facilitating the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and ending the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala. The United Nations has used quiet diplomacy to avert imminent wars.

A free booklet, *60 Ways the United Nations Makes a Difference*, published by the UN Department of Public Information, provides in words and pictures a sampling of what the United Nations and its component bodies have accomplished since 1945. Contact Riley McMahon, [mcmahon@unusa.org](mailto:mcmahon@unusa.org) or see [un.org/un60/sixty\\_ways\\_un\\_makes\\_difference.html](http://un.org/un60/sixty_ways_un_makes_difference.html).

# THE ADVOCACY CORNER

Gail Karpinski Cornell [Advocacy Chair and member of the board of directors of UNA-SF]

## The International Criminal Court makes its first arrest

The first arrest warrant issued by the ICC focuses on a Congolese leader (Thomas Lubanga) accused of monstrous atrocities. The allegations include abducting and forcing children under the age of 15 to be soldiers and sex slaves and brutalizing and degrading the children to keep them under control.

The arrest of Lubanga is the culmination of cooperation between the Democratic Republic of Congo, UN Peacekeeping forces, and the government of France. The UNA-USA, which has been a strong supporter of the ICC, expressed gratification to witness the success of the cooperation between the UN and other international groups in confronting atrocities.

## Annan submits proposal to “streamline” the UN

Noting that the UN must keep pace with the world of the twenty-first century, Kofi Annan has proposed administrative changes that are warmly supported by the Bush Administration.

Here are some of the proposed changes:

- Convert 2,500 short-term peacekeeping jobs into a flexible and mobile corps of specialists who can respond to urgent missions. Peacekeeping currently accounts for a budget of \$7 million and 15,000 staff in the field.
- Regroup by function the 25 UN departments that currently report to Secretary General Annan. Annan proposes delegating the operational management of these departments to his deputy, Mark Malloch Brown (formerly Annan’s chief of staff).
- Relocate some administrative functions from New York to countries where the costs are lower. Translation and printing functions have been suggested as potential “outsourcing” functions. The UN’s purchasing activities may be outsourced as well. Purchasing activities in the UN have been particularly problematic. According to a recent UN audit, carelessness in purchasing has resulted in losses of tens of millions of dollars.

The Bush Administration and UN Ambassador John Bolton strongly support these reforms. However, several developing nations in the General Assembly are very wary of the proposed changes, believing that they represent efforts of large nations to wrest control of the UN away from them. UN observers expect that there will be major “behind the scenes” battles between large and small countries concerning these proposed reforms.

## UN reforms from the perspective of Egypt’s UN ambassador

Egypt’s Ambassador to the UN Maged Abdelaziz feels that rich and powerful countries are exploiting the drive to reform the UN with the objective of gaining greater control over the organization. In the Ambassador’s opinion, the degree of mistrust and conflict between the developed and developing nations on the issue of reform has reached a crisis level.

Central to the issue is the UN budget. Dues payments are being linked to implementation of proposed reforms. Developing countries feel they are being pressured to accept reforms that would benefit richer nations and create inequities with developing nations. In the words of the Egyptian ambassador, “we should not threaten to put [the UN] into a financial crisis that will affect all of us in the various areas of its work.” Reform, in his opinion, must reflect common objectives of all members of the UN and not narrow national interests of a few rich nations.

## Hopeful new UN Human Rights Council

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of International Human Rights Watch is “cautiously hopeful” that the new Human Rights Council will represent an improvement over its predecessor, the discredited Human Rights Commission. He makes the following points:

- A number of very abusive governments (e.g., Sudan, Libya, and Syria) who had been members of the previous Commission declined to run for the new Council, fearing they would be rejected.
- Iran and Venezuela requested membership but were rejected because of their poor human rights policies.
- Under the previous Commission, abusive governments vied to become members in order to deflect visits by UN investigators. With the new Council, members will be the first countries to be scrutinized, and they must cooperate with investigators if they are to retain membership.
- Members of the new Council are selected by competitive vote of the entire General Assembly rather than by “back-room” deals.
- Success of the new Council will depend on whether violators of human rights are shamed before their own people and before the world.
- Although the US chose not to seek membership in the new Council, it is in a position to help the new group to succeed. The US could co-sponsor resolutions and use its political clout to strengthen the Council.

# Giving peace a chance

By Marike Bachrach, Jeff Ellingson, and Jette Winckler

The Young Professionals for International Cooperation (YPIC) of UNA-SF organized a special event on June 1 to commemorate and celebrate UN peacekeeping efforts past and present, and to honor UN peacekeepers around the world. Jette Winckler, chair of UNA-SF YPIC, opened the meeting, quoting Secretary-General Kofi Annan that



“while peacekeeping by itself cannot end a war ... it can prevent a recurrence of fighting. Above all, it gives time and space for conflict resolution. It gives peace a chance”.

The evening of tribute was a great success and hosted four distinguished speakers discussing the specific role of the three Nordic countries—Norway, Sweden and Denmark—in developing the UN Peacekeeping concept and operations around the world.

City College professor and UN scholar Jay Sayed described the vital role of the UN in global peacekeeping efforts. He was followed by Norwegian Consul General Are-Jostein Norheim who outlined Norway’s multilateral development assistance priorities of which the UN is by far the largest recipient. For 2006, Norwegian development assistance accounts for 0.96 percent of GNI (Gross National Income), which is more than NOK 18 billion (US\$2.8 billion). The current Norwegian government wants to increase the level of development assistance to 1.0 percent of GNI during its term in office. Since 1945, Norway has participated in 21 UN peacekeeping

operations and Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trygve Lie, served as the first Secretary-General of the United Nations

Swedish Consul General Barbro Osher then spoke with passion and insight about the second (and probably best known) Secretary-General, the Swedish diplomat and poet Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld who became Secretary-General in 1953 and served until September 18, 1961 when he died in a plane crash while on a peace mission in the Congo. Dag Hammarskjöld was instrumental in coining and developing the philosophical and practical concepts of conflict prevention and resolution within the institutional framework of the UN system, and he traveled around the world to countries in conflict to facilitate peacekeeping. In 2002, The Dag Hammarskjöld Medal was established to honor personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty during UN peacekeeping missions.

Finally, former UN Peacekeeping Observer Peder Pedersen of Denmark spoke about his personal experiences as a UN Peacekeeper in the former Yugoslavia, and the audience was taken on a journey through the landscape of war raged nations, mine infected fields and the realities of peacekeeping for those who serve on the ground. Mr. Pedersen’s presentation was dedicated to the sacrifice made by his friend and peacekeeper, Mr. Per Hjort Skibelund of Denmark who was killed in Yugoslavia by a mine. He and his Polish partner struck a mine in the middle of a track they had traveled frequently.

Pedersen’s passion for the peacekeepers safety and his insight on why the political decision makers are not willing to respond to the needs on the ground, as illustrated in Somalia and Rwanda, gave the seminar audience a chilling reality check on the limitations of UN peacekeeping. The mandate of peacekeeping is constrained and the blue helmets restricted by rules of engagement which only allow self-defense, and there is often a political unwillingness to respond in time with the resources needed. Mr. Pedersen’s somber account of his experiences and personal losses made the statistics released from the UN much too real: 124 peacekeepers from 46 countries lost their lives to violence, diseases and accidents in 2005 and as of June 1, 2006, 32 more have fallen in the line of duty.

Seminar organizer Jette Winckler wishes to extend a special thanks to Susan Hoffman, Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at San Francisco State University for hosting the event and for partnering with YPIC. Also our sincere thank you to the speakers and all the participants for thoughtful questions and reflections. The presentations were all outstanding and gave us the opportunity to learn about UN peacekeeping efforts first hand.

United Nations Association of San Francisco  
3450 Sacramento Street, # 507 • San Francisco, CA 94118



## United Nations Association of San Francisco

E: [una-sf@earthlink.net](mailto:una-sf@earthlink.net) • W: [una-sf.org](http://una-sf.org)  
3450 Sacramento Street, # 507, San Francisco, CA 94118

Kimberly Weichel, President  
Lyndie Kahanek, Vice President  
Jette Winckler, Vice President  
Gail Karpinski Cornell, Chair, Advocacy  
Arti Denterlein, Co-Chair, Education  
Jay Sayed, Co-Chair, Education  
Consul General of Norway Are-Jostein Norheim

Barbara Christensen	Roger O'Connor
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George Geevargis	Jane E. Wilson
Greta Glugoski	Lawrence Wong

The United Nations Association of San Francisco (UNA-SF) is the San Francisco chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA, [unausa.org](http://unausa.org)), a national, nonpartisan, and nonprofit organization.

UNA-USA is a center for innovative programs to engage Americans in issues of global concern, from education and HIV/AIDS to peace, security, and international law. Its educational and humanitarian campaigns, including teaching students in urban schools, clearing minefields, and providing school-based support for children living in HIV/AIDS-affected communities in Africa, allow people to make a global impact at the local level. UNA-USA encourages United States leadership in the United Nations and is a part of the World Federation of United Nations Associations.

UNA-USA has more than 175 chapters and divisions across the country and nearly 20,000 members. These members carry out programs and campaigns at the local level through events, educational promotions and fundraising. The Association also has a Student Alliance—a nationwide network of students, from elementary school to college, that makes students' opinions regarding global challenges heard amongst their peers, within their communities, across the nation, and around the world—and a young professionals network called Young Professionals for International Cooperation (YPIC) with more than 1,500 members. For membership information see [unausa.org](http://unausa.org).