

S P E A K E R N O T E S

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The United Nations was set up by 26 nations in June 1945 and came into existence on October 24th of that year when it had been “ratified” or agreed by the governments of a majority of those nations. [CLICK] So – what has it achieved in its first 75 years? Well –it was designed to “save humanity from the scourge of War which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind...” in two World Wars. It has not prevented all wars – but it has prevented a 3rd World War – which is, perhaps, its major achievement. But –

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– it’s Security Council has provided [CLICK] world-changing **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** to the people of the world – ideas, and concepts, backed up by Treaties and Declarations which have changed how we organise ourselves as a human family.

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[CLICK] First – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [CLICK] Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of US President, Franklin D Roosevelt was the Chair of the Commission that drew it up – and was the driving force behind getting it signed on December 10th 1948.

It was world-changing as, after the horrors of the Holocaust and the 2nd World War, it recognised that “the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world’. It declares that human rights are to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live. It includes the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy and other rights, like the right to social security, health and education.

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The Declaration was a response to the atrocities of the Second World War - like the mass genocide against the Jews at Auschwitz where 6 million people were exterminated for no reason other than their ethnicity

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The murder of the journalist, Jamal Kashoggi, at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Turkey in 2018 shows that human rights are just as important today as they were 75 years ago.

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The Member Governments of the United Nations have agreed [CLICK] many other **Human Rights Laws or “Instruments”** which are binding on those governments that sign and ratify them. Some of the main ones are [CLICK] the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women; [CLICK] The Convention on the Rights of the Child; and [CLICK] the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities – signed in March 2007. The UN’s Human Rights work continues today!

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Children’s Rights were very poorly defined until the UN Convention of 1979. Now children have legal protection and rights in almost every country of the world.

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[<-CLICK->] De-colonisation and the elimination of empires was another great founding idea of the UN – pushed by US President Franklin Roosevelt – who got Winston Churchill, the leader of the great British Empire and himself a great believer in Empire – to agree to it. And the UN has been massively successful in its de-colonisation efforts: [<-CLICK->] [<-CLICK->] in 1945, when it was born – 750 million people lived in countries controlled by imperial powers – chiefly France, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. [<-CLICK->] [<-CLICK->] Today, only 2 million do.

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Colonialism and Imperial officers, like these, cared little for the human rights of those whose countries they occupied. Arguably, they did some good - but their oppression of whole peoples and nations was appalling.

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Winston Churchill was a Colonial Servant as a young man and allowing the UN to introduce its decolonising programme was something he was deeply opposed to. However - for peace and the greater good, he agree. Like Apartheid, he saw that colonialism was a system that had to be ended.

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The UN has maintained its focus on “saving humanity from the scourge of war” – by becoming the centre for Peace-making in our world. It developed the idea of Peace-keeping [<-CLICK->] [<-CLICK->] – and today, there are over 100,000 UN Peace Keeping Soldiers at work in 14 peace-keeping programmes around our world. It also provides a focus for [<-CLICK->] [<-CLICK->] peace negotiations around the world and promotes the idea of [<-CLICK->] [<-CLICK->] conflict transformation. The UN itself, its staff and its agencies have won the Nobel Peace Prize 11 times in its first 75 years.

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This is Berlin and its Brandenburg Gate, devastated at the end of the Second World War.

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No wonder peace was the UN’s No. 1 priority.

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The UN believes in the duty of all governments [<-CLICK->] to care for its poorest citizens. Therefore, it has set up agencies to promote development and care for refugees - [<-CLICK->] [<-CLICK->] and people caught up in natural disasters. [<-CLICK->][<-CLICK->]

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Disasters like the impact of Typhoon Hayan which swept across the Philippines

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[<-CLICK->] Perhaps the UN’s most famous Care agency is the one set up to care for children: [<-CLICK->] UNICEF – which stands for “United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund” – as it was set up originally to look after children, especially orphans, after the Second World War. Another famous one is [<-CLICK->] UN Women - set up to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

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As we saw with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN has prioritised the care and happiness of children in its first 75 years.

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One of UNICEF's greatest breakthrough is Oral Rehydration Therapy which has save literally millions of childrens' lives

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In it's first 75 years, the UN has negotiated many [[CLICK](#)] International Laws & Regulations including laws [[CLICK](#)] [[CLICK](#)] to protect intellectual property – music, literature, everything that can be copyrighted is now protected worldwide by UN agreement; [[CLICK](#)] [[CLICK](#)] the Law of the Sea: who owns what on the sea-bed and who can catch fish where; [[CLICK](#)] [[CLICK](#)] and the Law of the air – ways to police the skies, organising air lanes and setting the regulations – the traffic lights in the sky if you like – about who can fly where. Without these laws, planes and ships would be crashing into each other all the time.

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The United Nations is the only international law-maker that has the power to get every nation to stop - but, like most drivers, there are still a lot of nations that try to run the lights.

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A lot of people think that the UN is just a talking shop – where diplomats are paid a lot of money to push paper around: NOT true! After the Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed the right [[CLICK](#)] of EVERY ONE on earth to health, food and education, it set up agencies to provide [[CLICK](#)] [[CLICK](#)] Health for All (the World Health Organisation – WHO); [[CLICK](#)] [[CLICK](#)] Food for all (The Food and Agriculture Organisation – FAO and the World Food Programme, both based in Rome, Italy) - and [[CLICK](#)] Education for All which is driven by [[CLICK](#)] UNESCO – the UN Education, Science and Cultural Organisation, based in Paris, France. “Leave No One Behind” is one of the UN's most powerful slogans as it means: the United Nations serves EVERYONE – Every single Man, Woman and Child living on Planet Earth.

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Especially children

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Especially the world's poorest children - who don't even have desks to sit at

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[[CLICK](#)] The UN has led the fight to protect our world's Natural Environment – to protect [[CLICK](#)] all the plants and animals with whom we share this planet, and to stop the pollution of freshwater, sea, land & space;

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Because we have a beautiful environment that we want to protect for our children and grand-children

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In 1986, it developed [[CLICK](#)] the idea of Sustainable Development: “... *meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*” [[CLICK](#)] The idea is to balance the needs of human beings with those of the environment and the economy. It's a hard idea to get your head around – so we often use the 4-word slogan used at the South Africa summit on Sustainable Development: [[CLICK](#)] ‘SOME - FOR ALL - FOREVER!’

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Perhaps most famously, the UN is leading the fight to stop and [[CLICK](#)] reverse Climate Change. [[CLICK](#)] In Paris, France – in December 2015 – it got 193 governments to agree to limit global warming

and introduce their own plans to reduce their carbon emissions massively each year to meet their agreed targets.

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Some leaders, like Donald Trump, still believe that Climate Change is not happening - but look back and forth between these two views of the Arctic ice cap, taken 30 years apart - and the warming of the planet is all too obvious to the naked eye. [Flick back and forth between the two]

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And climate change is not just about melting ice caps and glaciers: it's about rising sea levels and extreme weather - hurricanes, typhoons etc. - which cause devastation as Superstorm Sandy did to this Rollercoaster!

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More seriously, floods and fires caused by extreme weather, have already caused billions of dollars worth of damage to people's property - and is destined to do much, much more!

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Greta Thunberg made an [emotional speech at the UN](#) on Climate Change – demonstrating that young people can play a crucial role in advancing the UN's Agenda.

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Also in 2015, the 193 Member Governments of the United Nations agreed [[CLICK](#)] the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. [[CLICK](#)] These include 169 targets for governments to meet by 2030 – or before - to eliminate absolute poverty, save the planet's environment, deliver peace and justice and – that slogan again: “LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND!!”

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Goal 8 promises full employment and decent work for all young women and men by 2030 - something that many young people in Africa are deeply hoping for.

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The crisis of youth unemployment is not limited to Africa: it is everywhere! Too many people - not enough jobs!

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Peace Child International - the organisation behind this initiative - works to help young women improve their businesses in villages in Northern Sierra Leone - helping their country achieve sustainable development goal 8

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Any Questions??

There is no human institution more deserving of our support – and it is my fervent wish that some of you will go forward and serve this great institution in the course of its next 75 years.