

Looking Towards the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations in 2020

A Quick Recap to Set the Scene

The United Nations was founded in 1945: from the ashes of countries devastated by war, the Holocaust and economic depression, world leaders devised a plan. The work of the United Nations continues to be guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter signed in June 1945 by the 51 founding members in San Francisco, and came into force on 24 October 1945. An integral part of the Charter is The Statute of the International Court of Justice.

Currently the UN is made up of 193 Member States

The Founding Purposes of the United Nations Remain Equally Pertinent Today

The second secretary-general, Dag Hammarskjöld, said that **the UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.**

Key elements include:

- The UN provides a forum for its members to express their views in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and other bodies and committees.
- By enabling dialogue between its members, and by hosting negotiations, the Organisation has become a mechanism for governments to find areas of agreement and solve problems together.
- It takes action on the issues including promoting peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, fundamental human rights and freedoms, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, and food production

An important landmark that as Soroptimists we celebrate every year was the establishment of **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on **10 December 1948** providing a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations setting out fundamental human rights to be universally protected and has been translated into over 500 languages.

How Can We be Involved in Celebrating the UN at 75?

- **Getting Involved with the Global Conversation: Follow the UN2020 Initiative**

The UN2020 initiative is dedicated to using the 75th anniversary of the United Nations as an opportunity to take stock and strengthen the UN system in partnership with civil society, governments, and the UN to support a people-centred approach at all levels with a view to strengthening the UN system improving relations and structures for global problem-solving to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Join the movement to hold governments accountable for ensuring all aspects of gender equality remains high on the political agenda

Find out more by visiting www.un2020.org

Together First is a global movement of organisations and individuals committed to creating a global system that works for all, championing steps to improve global governance systems to better address the most pressing risks facing the world. The starting point is that discussions must be open, inclusive and accountable to all stakeholders. The anniversary presents an opportunity to consider how the UN must adapt to cope with the global threats facing humanity. The President of the General Assembly said recently: ***“it is a chance to make the UN more effective, more transparent, more accountable and more relevant to ‘we the peoples.’***

Do you know of events happening near you? For example UNA-UK will be calling for UN reform in 2020 through the **Together First campaign**, they are holding the first of a programme of events in November 2019

Let's Help our Representatives to Promote our Work at the UN as Part of the Celebrations

Key Areas of Work for us as Soroptimists that Reflect the Work of the UN:

- Promotion of the Sustainable Development Agenda
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls
- Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse
- Promoting high standards of sexual health
- Promote the rights of disabled women and children
- Environmental Issues and addressing the factors increasing the dangers of Climate Change
- Promoting the Main UN Offices and Programmes Working on Development
 - World Health Organization
 - The Food and Agriculture Organisation,
 - UNICEF

If we do this can we Really Make a Difference?

As members of individual clubs we all ask the question how can our small project make a difference; alone it may not but when we look at the larger joined up picture ~ yes we certainly do and the evidence we provide adds to the body of knowledge collected that can be used to bring about change: we are playing our part

Finally ~ remember the "Real Meaning of Universal Human Rights"

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Eleanor Roosevelt Chair of Drafting Committee

We are that concerned citizen action living in small places.

Rita Beaumont
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