

# UNA-Westchester Global Connection



**United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) Westchester Chapter**  
<http://www.unawestchester.org> **October 2015**

**UNITED NATIONS DAY 2015:**  
*UN 70: Strong UN, Better World*

## *“Fostering Global Citizens to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”*

**YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester\***  
**515 North Street, White Plains, NY 10605**

**Sunday October 25, 2015, 4:00 to 6:00 P.M.**  
**(Registration begins at 3:30)**



### ***Keynote Speaker***

Thomas Gass is the Assistant Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs at the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs. From 2009 to 2013, he was the Ambassador and Country Director for Nepal of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. He has wide-ranging experience in development cooperation and served as head of the Economic and Development Section at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York from 2004 to 2009. He had earlier postings with the embassy in Guyana, and in Rome with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute.

Dr. Gass holds a Ph.D. in natural sciences and an M.Sc. in agricultural sciences. He is married and the father of three children.

### ***Program highlights:***

- Welcome from cosponsors and local political leaders
- Keynote address by Dr. Thomas Gass
- Discussion of Youth Assembly report led by Young Professionals cochair Martha Perez
- Workshop results from UNA- and AKA-sponsored students who attended Youth Assembly at the UN
- Sustainable Development video by Woodlands High School students
- Reception with refreshments

### ***Cosponsors with UNA-USA:***

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester

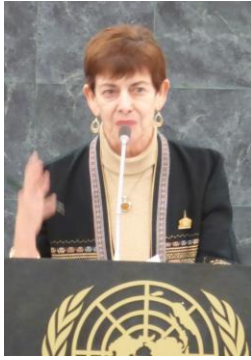
**Please register:** [www.unawestchester.org](http://www.unawestchester.org) or  
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**\*Directions:** From 287 East: Take exit 8E, turn right on White Plains Rd., continue on to North Street. YWCA is opposite White Plains High School.  
From 287 West: Take exit 9S, merge onto Westchester Ave., turn left on Bryant Ave/Bryant Ave Bridge. YWCA is on the left on North St.

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<b>Editors: Scott C. Monje, Marcia Brewster</b>	

## *Letter from the President*



Dear Friends,

The 70th anniversary of the United Nations is an ideal time for us to celebrate the important work that the UN does in all aspects of our lives and to reflect on the ways that we can contribute to the post-2015 development agenda. The UN held the Sustainable Development Summit, when the member states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), on Sept. 25–27 (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>). Our UN Day event will highlight those goals and discuss ideas on actions we can take as global citizens to achieve the goals at the household and community level. There is more information about the SDGs below.

We are honored to have the Assistant Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs to provide the background to this crucial agenda, which applies to all nations and will guide the UN over the next 15 years. Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and the YWCA of White Plains and Central Westchester are cosponsoring the event with UNA-Westchester.

UNA was pleased to partner with AKA on another important initiative—sponsoring 11 local students to attend the Youth Assembly at the UN, August 5–7. A report on the Assembly (page 3) shows how much the students benefited from the experience.

Finally, for those who missed it, UNA-Westchester chapter held its annual meeting at the Community Unitarian Church in White Plains. About 70 people attended the program, including many students and young professionals. Bob Clark, Acting Director and Archivist at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, was our

keynote speaker. We honored long-term and lifetime UNA members and heard their testimonies about their motivation and support to the United Nations over the years. Please visit our website and the photo gallery page. We also recognized the winners of the UNA student video contest, Taylor Courtney from Montessori 27 Middle School in Yonkers and the UN Club from Mount Vernon High School.

In celebrating the work of the United Nations in its 70th year, not only are nations adopting the SDGs, but they are also engaged in negotiations on a universal climate agreement that is scheduled to be completed in Paris at the end of the year. It is vital for our UNA constituents to become engaged in related actions that contribute to transforming our world starting in 2015. Please join us for our discussions of these important matters. We will hear about the visions and action agendas of young professionals and students in Westchester to get ideas on what is needed for our future.

I hope to see you and your guests at our celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

—*Marcia Brewster*

## *Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

World leaders from 193 countries gathered at the United Nations from 25 to 27 September 2015 to adopt the post-2015 development agenda “**Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**” The 2030 Agenda has been developed after arduous negotiations amongst member states in order to have a framework that would succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were adopted in 2000.

The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. The agenda recognizes

that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It aims to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and to heal and secure the planet. It expresses their determination to take the bold and transformative steps that are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. It is recognized that we can leave no one behind. The Agenda has identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 specific targets that demonstrate its scale and ambition. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what remained unaccomplished. They strive to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, the social, and the environmental.

The SDGs and the related targets are expected to stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. These include, in particular:

- ending poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.
- protecting the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.
- ensuring that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.
- fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence.
- mobilizing the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for

Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org> for more information.

—Narinder Kakar

### ***Report of the Youth Assembly***

The United Nations Association-USA, Westchester Chapter, continued to build on its amazing partnership with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority by sponsoring 11 students to participate in this summer's Youth Assembly, held at the United Nations in August. This year's assembly was entirely focused on youth-led initiatives exposing tomorrow's leaders to global development. We had a wonderful team of engaged, passionate, and talented students from all over the region. The group included two student leaders from Mercy College, four students from the UN Club at Mount Vernon High School, one student from Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx, and four from White Plains High School and Oakwood Friends High School in Wappingers Falls.

On the first day of the assembly, the students engaged in strong discussions on youth involvement in the United Nations. The assembly started with a welcome by the project director, Patrick Sciaratta, which was followed by opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Federico A. Gonzalez of Paraguay, H.E. Ambassador Henry MacDonald of Suriname, H.E. Ambassador Ib Petersen of Denmark, and lastly Amina J. Mohammed, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the post-2015 development agenda. The Secretary General's envoy on youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, also gave his welcomes to the assembly through video transmission.

This assembly was an experience full of excitement and opportunities for each and every youth representative. Each discussion and panel spoke about issues that resonated with the youth. For example, the assembly addressed youth financial responsibility, which centered on entrepreneurship among youth, and youth civic tech, which addressed the concept of using technology to empower citizen participation in local government. The panel defined civic tech as “any sort of tech that helps governments work more efficiently.”



*AKA- and UNA-sponsored students at the UN*

The assembly also had a major focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships as a vital accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, the assembly included wonderful performances by amazingly talented students, most notably Xiuhtezcatl Roske-Martinez, the youth activist and director of Earth Guardians. Although Roske-Martinez is only 15 years old, he is already a teenage superstar fighting to protect the environment in order to provide a safe and habitable planet for generations to come.

The following days, the students were able to attend more workshops focused on social entrepreneurship, the climate track, and personal empowerment. These workshops were held in different conference rooms at the same time, which gave the students a chance to choose the discussions that were most important to them. The students were also divided into groups and were allowed to visit a country’s permanent mission. Our own team was divided, with one group visiting Denmark’s permanent mission and the other

going to Cyprus’s permanent mission. One of our youth leaders, Chaelin Kim, felt so empowered through the conference that she challenged the Danish ambassador to address the need for European countries to be involved in facilitating discussions between North and South Korea. Overall, this assembly was a great educational experience for all youth and we hope to be able to sponsor more students in the years to come.

*-Martha Perez, Cochair, Young Professionals*

### *The IAEA: Verifying the Iran Deal*

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a member of the UN system. It is responsible for enforcing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and, now, for verifying compliance with the new Iran agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

There has been a great deal of discussion about the JCPOA and its verification regime. Much of that discussion has been false or misleading. Rather than focusing on key elements of the agreement, many have emphasized whatever looks weak or can be made to look weak. People will tell you, for example, that the deal permits the Iranians to have a bomb in 10 years, that it lets the Iranians inspect themselves, or that 24-day delays in inspections will allow the Iranians to hide evidence of nuclear activity. The JCPOA is not perfect. It does not deal with objectionable Iranian activity that is unrelated to nuclear matters. Like any international agreement, it is a compromise, but it is far stronger than people let on. I would like to review some actual key elements of the JCPOA.

### *Uranium and the Verification Regime*

This agreement focuses on the activity that has been at the core of key allegations against Iran,

the production of nuclear fuel, which Iran says it wants for peaceful purposes and is entitled to under the NPT. (The NPT grants countries a right to a nuclear industry, but not specifically to the indigenous production of fuel.) The process of enriching uranium with centrifuges is the same whether you want to produce reactor fuel to generate electricity or bomb-grade fuel for a nuclear weapon. The essential difference is in how long you do it, or more precisely, how many times you run uranium gas through a cascade of centrifuges. Natural uranium consists primarily of two isotopes: it is roughly 0.7 percent U-235 and 99.3 U-238. Most reactor fuel is enriched to the level of about 3.5 percent U-235; Iran's Tehran Research Reactor takes a fuel that is just below 20 percent U-235; bomb-grade is in excess of 90 percent U-235. Unfortunately, the process gets easier the further it goes, so that when you have reached 20 percent (or even 3.5 percent), you have actually gone most of the way toward reaching 90 percent. The technical ease with which one might glide from civilian production to military production is at the center of the controversy. Thus the monitoring of uranium production is at the heart of the Iran deal.

Under the JCPOA, Iran reaffirms its denunciation of nuclear weapons and acceptance of standard inspections under its NPT Safeguards Agreement; agrees to additional challenge inspections, granting access to nuclear facilities within 24 hours (2 hours if inspectors are already on site), under an NPT Additional Protocol; and is obliged to give prior notification of the construction or modification of nuclear facilities under modified Code 3.1 (that is, modified Code 3.1 of the Subsidiary Arrangements to the Safeguards Agreement). Furthermore, going beyond the NPT, Iran forswears any research-and-development activities applicable to the development of a nuclear weapon, including dual-purpose activities. These obligations do not expire, ever. In addition, Iran has agreed to added measures and restrictions beyond those for a limited time period, which vary in

duration from 10 to 25 years, depending on the specific measure. Most of the discussion has focused on these. While nothing in life is guaranteed and the situations are not perfect parallels, it is worth noting that inspectors successfully disarmed Iraq in the 1990s without any of these additional measures.

When it comes to Iran's uranium-conversion and uranium-enrichment facilities, monitoring by remote-controlled cameras and radio frequency identification (RFID) technology will be permanent and continuous—24 hours a day, 7 days a week, forever—under Iran's Safeguards Agreement. In addition, for 15 years Iran will permit direct access by IAEA inspectors on demand up to once a day. In an unprecedented arrangement, Iran's uranium mines and mills will be under continuous monitoring for 25 years. In another unprecedented arrangement, Iran's centrifuge-manufacturing facilities will be under continuous monitoring for 20 years. The importation of dual-use materials will be monitored for 10 years. The idea here is to keep track of Iran's uranium-related resources. If inspectors can keep track of how much uranium Iran has and where it is—how much enters each facility, how much leaves, and where it goes—then they should be able to detect if uranium is diverted for unapproved purposes. Without the fuel, you cannot make a bomb.

#### *Not Anytime, Anywhere?*

As a precaution going beyond the continuous monitoring of declared nuclear sites, the JCPOA permits inspectors to investigate other sites, military or civilian, if they suspect that illicit activity related to nuclear weapons is being undertaken there. This alone is the subject of the "anytime, anywhere" controversy. The compromise reached allows Iran to challenge the accusation and to give reasons why the accusation is not true. The delay, however, is limited to a maximum of 24 days. It is important to understand that this is a

limit on Iran's ability to stall. More than 120 countries around the world adhere to an Additional Protocol; only Iran faces this restriction, which lasts for 15 years.

Critics claim that this gives Iran "24 days to remove evidence of nuclear activity," but it is not *possible* to remove evidence of nuclear activity within 24 days. Inspectors can detect the presence of nuclear materials *years* after it has been removed, and efforts to scrub a site leave evidence both of its presence and of the attempt to hide it.

Now it may be possible to conceal nonnuclear activity related to the development of nuclear weapons within 24 days. Relevant computer simulations could be undertaken without detection under virtually any inspection regime, but by themselves they are not going to give you a bomb. Generally speaking, the easier it is to hide, the less likely it is to produce a breakthrough. Since no inspection regime can guarantee that cheating will never happen, a high likelihood that any possible cheating would be caught or ultimately be irrelevant is an acceptable standard. More importantly, the agreement's opponents offer no superior solution.

#### *Potential Military Dimensions and Parchin*

Finally, Iran has been accused of engaging in research with "possible military dimensions" (PMD) in the past. This could involve the development and testing of conventional explosives of the sort used to trigger a nuclear bomb or testing the reaction of various materials to extremely high stress. Recent attention in this regard has focused on a particular building at the Parchin military facility. The CIA believes that this activity was halted in 2003, but many people want it investigated. Iran is loath to admit that it engaged in research dedicated to developing a nuclear weapon (the ayatollah has said publicly that nuclear weapons are un-Islamic) and is reluctant to invite outsiders to inspect its

military facilities, but an arrangement has been worked out. The IAEA will investigate the issue and keep the details to itself. Since this concerns past activity, this will involve a one-time investigation rather than ongoing monitoring. Most of the investigation will entail a review of documents, but there will also be some physical inspections of relevant sites. The IAEA will write up its conclusions by mid-December, before the main Iran deal goes into effect. The conclusions will be available to the inspectors. Iran will not have to admit publicly to past misconduct, but the purpose of the JCPOA is to prevent nuclear proliferation, not to elicit public confessions. The IAEA reports that the Iranians have been cooperative so far.

There are valid reasons for wanting to examine PMD, but that is not the same as saying it is central to the overall agreement. First, if IAEA inspectors can determine how far Iran has progressed toward developing the nonnuclear aspects of a nuclear weapon, then they might be better able to calculate how long it would take Iran to build a bomb if it did indeed break out of the verification regime. (Remember, the much-discussed "breakout time" is not how long it would take them to build a bomb, but rather how long it would take them to produce enough bomb-grade uranium to build a bomb. Building the actual bomb is a separate process.)

Second, if inspectors at some point in the future find evidence of work on bomb components, then a thorough understanding of the work completed in the past will help them determine whether the new find is the product of recent clandestine activity or simply a relic of previous efforts. Thus it would help prove that a discovery is evidence of a violation or that accusations of a violation are unfounded. This would be useful in settling disputes, and disputes are sure to arise. At the same time, it is not essential to the purpose of preventing the diversion of nuclear material for unauthorized purposes.



Parchin is one subset of the PMD investigation. Iran is alleged to have conducted nonnuclear testing there. Since the allegation concerns activity that ended a dozen years ago, since the building may have been used for other purposes since then, and since the building may never have contained nuclear material, even if testing was done there, the prospects of finding conclusive evidence of anything are slim. It is also worth noting that the one-time inspection of Parchin, which incidentally has already been carried out, is the source of the accusation that Iran will inspect itself. Because of political and military sensitivities, the Iranians want to be able to say that they did not allow foreign inspectors to enter the building. Iranians conducted the environmental swipes, put the evidence in IAEA-provided containment bags, and then sealed the bags while IAEA inspectors watched via real-time video feed, using GPS to assure that the cameras were really where the Iranians said they were. That said, most of the PMD investigation involves a review of documents, and little is expected from environmental swipes.

By the way, sensitive or not, IAEA inspectors already visited Parchin twice in 2005 and found nothing suspicious. By agreement with Iran, the inspectors were free to pick any quadrant of the Parchin site and examine five buildings of their choosing in that quadrant. They did not have to identify the buildings they had chosen prior to their arrival. As it happens, they did not choose to visit the building that is now the focus of attention, although it was available to them.

### *An Effective Agreement*

Repeated accusations that the agreement did not produce “anytime, anywhere” inspections ignore the fact that the agreement actually produced 24/7 monitoring of the essential aspects of the issue and that the arrangements for challenge inspections of undeclared sites (the aspect that allegedly falls short of

“anytime, anywhere”) are perfectly adequate, indeed, an unprecedented achievement in themselves. There is no reason to believe the JCPOA will not be effective. The greatest threat to it are the hard-liners in the United States and Iran, but they would equally be threats to any agreement produced by negotiations.

—*Scott C. Monje*

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