



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION  
*of the United States of America*

## UNA-USA Newsletter - Nashville Chapter

P.O. Box 121745, Nashville, TN 37212 [www.una-nashville.org]

Spring 2009

(615) 870-8446

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## ANNUAL SPRING MEETING & DINNER

*May 5, 2009*

5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**“US-UN Relations in the Administration of President Obama”**

*Featuring*

**Mr. Joe Sills**

**Belmont United Methodist Church**

**21<sup>st</sup> Avenue South at Acklen in**

**Hillsboro Village**

Reception: 5:30 p.m.

Dinner: 6:00 p.m.

Program: 7:00 p.m.

**Reservation Required**

Call (615) 870-8446 or email [una-event@bellsouth.net](mailto:una-event@bellsouth.net)

By noon on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>

(Please specify if vegetarian plate preferred)

Cost: \$16.00 for adults and \$12.00 for students (Please note: any person who cancels after May 3<sup>rd</sup> is liable for the cost of dinner)

(Program only is free))

Mr. Joe Sills is a retired senior official from the United Nations secretariat. During his tenure at the UN he was press spokesman for Secretaries-General Perez de Cuellar and Boutros-Ghali, and Director of the UN's Washington office. Upon his retirement, he returned to his hometown of Nashville where he now serves as a member of the UNA-Nashville Board. Mr. Sills will discuss the prospects for US-UN relations in the Obama administration, contrasting them with the previous administration. The issues he will cover include human rights, UN peacekeeping, US participation in various treaty regimes, and payment of US financial obligations to the UN.

## President's Corner

Almost immediately upon entering office, President Obama began signaling a new direction for U.S. foreign policy that seeks to renew America's leadership in the world and emphasizes the importance of active and responsible U.S. engagement with the United Nations.

One example of this was the appointment of Susan Rice as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and the elevation of this position to the President's Cabinet. At her nomination hearings, Ms. Rice pointed out that, while not perfect, the United Nations, "by its very existence, provides the potential to enhance collective security, while affording a powerful platform for American leadership—leadership that can increase our own and others' security and prosperity."

The President has moved quickly in other foreign policy areas, too, broadening bilateral and multilateral dialogues and clearly articulating US repudiation of torture.

President Obama appears to be moving in a positive direction, but much remains to be done. There are several important international conventions, for example, to which the US is not yet a Party, but 2009 puts particular attention on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the new International Convention on Cluster Munitions (ICCM).

In December of this year, in Copenhagen, a UN Climate Change Conference will attempt to reach a new international climate change agreement. After a meeting in early March with President Obama, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated that he was fairly optimistic. "With US leadership, in partnership with the United Nations, we can and will reach a climate change deal that all nations can embrace," he said.

Recent domestic legislation has positioned the US closer to joining the ICCM. On 11 March 2009, President Obama signed into law a permanent ban on nearly all cluster bomb exports and set stringent rules for their use. According to the Cluster Munitions Coalition, this is a "major turnaround in US policy."

At our 2009 spring dinner, retired senior UN official and UNA Board member Joe Sills will address in more detail the new prospects for US-UN relations with respect to US participation in treaty regimes as well as in the areas of human rights, UN peacekeeping, and payment of US financial obligations to the UN. We invite you to join us for this important and timely discussion on Tuesday, May 5th.

Mary Pat Silveira

To show your support to President Obama for his efforts to strengthen American leadership in the world and at the United Nations, go to the national UNA-USA site, at <http://capwiz.com/unausa/issues/alert/?alertid=12456086>

You can also support U.S. participation in the International Convention on Cluster Munitions, by going to: <http://capwiz.com/unausa/issues/alert/?alertid=12243051>

## In Memoriam

The Nashville Chapter of the UNA-USA recently lost two long time members, [Bill Anderson](#), November 18, 2008, and [Virginia Wolf](#), March 12, 2009. Please remember their families during this time of bereavement.

## Lights Out Nashville

On March 28, at 8:30 p.m., Nashville's skyline went dark for one hour to honor Earth Hour 2009, to make a statement of concern about climate change and to demonstrate commitment to finding solutions. In doing this, Nashville was joining several major international cities, including Chicago, Hong Kong, Las Vegas, London, Los Angeles, Rome, Miami, Sydney and San Francisco. – to make a global statement of concern about climate change and to demonstrate commitment to finding solutions.

## **President Obama Signs Legislation to Restore U.S. Support for the UN Population Fund**

Fulfilling a pledge that he made during his first days in office, on March 11 President Obama signed legislation containing a \$50 million contribution to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This puts in motion the restoration of U.S. funding for UNFPA, which had been suspended since 2002.

From 2002 through 2008, the Bush administration blocked the release of \$244 million in congressionally appropriated funds for UNFPA due to concerns about the agency's activities in China.

"By resuming funding to UNFPA," President Obama said in a statement announcing his decision, "the U.S. will be joining 180 other donor nations working collaboratively to reduce poverty, improve the health of women and children, prevent HIV/AIDS and provide family planning assistance to women in 154 countries."

Funded entirely through voluntary contributions, UNFPA promotes maternal health, prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, and gender equality. The United States helped establish UNFPA in 1969 and serves on its Executive Board. According to Americans for UNFPA, the United States is the only country in the world that has withheld funding from the agency due to non-financial considerations. UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid applauded the announcement and said it "could not have come at a more critical time." In a January 23rd statement, she noted, "If women are to stop dying in childbirth and if reproductive health for all is to become a reality, we need increased political and financial commitment at all levels to implement strategies that we know will work. With the renewed U.S. support to women and to UNFPA, the odds of that happening are greatly improved." Obaid said the restoration of U.S. funding "will allow us to maintain recent gains during the financial crisis and provide support to women in some of the poorest countries in the world."

## **Winners of the 23rd UNA National High School Essay Contest**

The National High School Essay Contest on the UN inspires students to engage global issues and the work of the UN through scholarship and critical thinking. Each year UNA-USA publishes a topic and question of particular importance to the international community. Students then conduct research and write a response to the question, based not only on the information they have found, but also on their own views and opinion.

This year's National High School Essay Contest on the UN focused on Millennium Development Goal Seven, and asked students to tackle the challenge of ensuring environmental sustainability. Students wrote letters to the President of the United States on why ensuring environmental sustainability is so important and what the US should do to ensure that MDG 7 could be reached by 2015. A record number of students participated this year, yielding 73 semi-finalists and three national winners.

The top three national winners are Brandon Araki from Saratoga, CA (1st); Alicia A. Constant from Albuquerque, NM (2nd); and Prisca A. Ohito from Shoreview, MN (3rd). We are pleased to announce as well that three of the semi-finalists were from Tennessee: Ross Boone (Houston High School, Germantown), Derion Givens (White Station High School, Memphis), and Eidi Klumpe (Riverdale High School, Murfreesboro). Congratulations Ross, Derion and Eidi!"

### **NEW Student Alliance Program - Free Membership for Students**

Originally created in 1999, UNA-USA is proud to launch a more action-oriented member-focused Student Alliance program to meet the needs of today's globally minded students. Student Alliance serves as the umbrella program for all student participation in UNA's educational programs and humanitarian campaigns such as *Global Classrooms*, *Adopt-A-Minefield* and *HERO*, and is now **FREE** for all students from grade school through college graduation.

Student Alliance seeks to engage students in a nationwide network of motivated individuals, student advocacy groups, international affairs clubs, and Model UN teams who stand poised to collectively sound their voices and make their opinions heard amongst their peers, in their communities, across the nation and around the world! The new Student Alliance program now offers specific challenges, which include raising awareness, educating, advocating, and fundraising! All students will also soon be able to create personal profile pages to keep track of their activities and share experiences and news with friends.

Information will soon be available about creating local Student Alliance groups in elementary schools, high school and universities on the web site, but in the meantime please visit to learn more about the new more interactive Student Alliance program. Go to: <http://www.unausa.org/studentalliance>



## UN Association Seminars

*Please join us for these interesting and informative foreign affairs seminars*, another educational service of the Nashville Chapter, UNA-USA:

**April 16, 2009 – 4:30 p.m., Green Hills Library**

*“Cuban Health Care in the 21st Century” –*

**Dr. Henry Foster**, Former Chair of the U.S. Committee for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

All Seminars are free and open to the public. Please check our website, [www.una-nashville.org](http://www.una-nashville.org) for the latest information on location and times.

### Your Support is Appreciated!

Please be sure and renew your membership when it comes due, or consider joining the UNA if you haven't already. You can join at our website, <http://www.una-nashville.org>, or contact our office at 615-837-3581 and we'll send you a brochure. Our main sources of income are a portion of each member's dues, and annual contributions from our members and friends.

### Please note the following changes to the UNA-USA website:

Join - [www.unausa.org/join](http://www.unausa.org/join)  
Donate - [www.unausa.org/donate](http://www.unausa.org/donate)  
About Us - [www.unausa.org/aboutus](http://www.unausa.org/aboutus)  
Advocacy Alerts - <http://capwiz.com/unausa/home/>  
Toolkit for Members - [www.unausa.org/toolkit](http://www.unausa.org/toolkit)  
Washington Report - [www.unausa.org/washingtonreport](http://www.unausa.org/washingtonreport)  
Advocacy Tips - [www.unausa.org/advocacytips](http://www.unausa.org/advocacytips)  
National and Local Media Finder - <http://capwiz.com/unausa/dbq/media/>  
Featured Legislations and Bill Search <http://capwiz.com/unausa/issues/bills/>  
Chapter and Division Page - [www.unausa.org/chapters](http://www.unausa.org/chapters)  
2009 Advocacy Agenda - [www.unausa.org/advocacyagenda](http://www.unausa.org/advocacyagenda)  
Chapter Directory - [www.unausa.org/chapterdirectory](http://www.unausa.org/chapterdirectory)  
Blog - [www.unausa.org/blog](http://www.unausa.org/blog)  
E-Newsletter/UNA-USA World Bulletin - [www.unausa.org/enews](http://www.unausa.org/enews)  
Model UN - [www.unausa.org/modelun](http://www.unausa.org/modelun)  
Model UN Conference Calendar - [www.unausa.org/muncalendar](http://www.unausa.org/muncalendar)

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