2011 HIGHLIGHTS

UNOG divisions and services worked throughout 2011, together with various United Nations and other partners, in support of the Secretary-General’s priorities. This section of the Annual Report presents a selection of small and large efforts made during the past year which highlight the different aspects of work at UNOG and illustrate how those aspects each contribute to the Organization’s efforts to meet current global challenges together.

NEGOTIATION

UNOG is the home of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) which has become the premier international forum to ensure modern biology is used safely, securely and solely for peaceful purposes. The year 2011 concluded with a successful Seventh Review Conference which adopted, by consensus, a series of measures to strengthen the treaty. States Parties also took action to endorse the understandings they reached between 2007 and 2010; to revise their work programme for the next five years; to facilitate cooperation and assistance; to review advances in science and technology; and to strengthen national implementation.

COMMEMORATION

Passing the lessons of history on to the next generation is an important part of the outreach efforts of the United Nations. During 2011 both the annual Holocaust memorial events and the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda were commemorated with dignity and openness to discussion. More than 1,000 representatives of permanent missions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), staff members, and the Geneva international community participated in the Holocaust memorial, which focused the thoughts of younger generations on reasserting the need to uphold all human rights for all, prevent discrimination and denounce abuses through stirring speeches, music and quiet reflection. The special commemoration of the day of reflection on the genocide in Rwanda organized for school children was equally poignant, with students meeting and talking to a survivor, visiting an exhibition and being made aware of their responsibility to prevent genocide.

ACTION IN THE FIELD

As an example of action in the field in the support of real-time United Nations priorities, the UNOG Security and Safety Service conducted three security coordination and close-protection missions to Libya in 2011 on very short notice. Together with colleagues from the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York, UNOG security officers prepared the ground for the deployment of a United Nations office in the country. Subsequently, and again with DSS and DPKO, UNOG officers provided close protection for the Secretary-General on his unannounced visit to Tripoli, where he met the Chairman of the National Transitional Council, visited the site of a mass execution, and conversed with victims’ families and survivors of the tragedy. UNOG officers also provided security and safety services to members of the Human Rights Commission of Inquiry in Tripoli. In all of these cases, UNOG provided key and timely support to enable other parts of the United Nations system to complete their missions successfully.
2011 HIGHLIGHTS

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

The UNOG “Library Talks” series was created in 2010 to promote knowledge-sharing and exchange. The programme was intensified and widened in 2011, attracting over 300 participants in seven events during the year. The Talks bring together diplomats, academics, United Nations staff members and representatives of international and local Geneva to discuss a broad range of topics from technical matters, such as “Distance learning and development”, “Knowledge-sharing: open science and educational resources for an open society” and “Transboundary waters”, to political issues, such as “Building democratic problem-solving global communities” and “Road map for peacebuilding: the United Nations and our collective path to peace”. The latter was accompanied by a Library exhibition of League of Nations era portraits from its archives. The UNOG “Library Talks” initiative is enjoying increasing popularity and is working to become a central forum at UNOG for substantive political and academic discussions in the context of international Geneva.

RENOVATION

On 8 July 2011, for the first time in the history of UNOG, the Swiss Federal Council paid a working visit to the Palais des Nations to discuss proposed plans for renovation of the Palais des Nations. Led by the President, Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, the Council visited basements, technical rooms and roofs (a side of the Palais rarely seen) to witness the magnitude of the requirements. The President then announced the Council’s agreement in principle to allocate SwF 50 million to improve the energy efficiency of the Palais. This single contribution is intended for the implementation of works in support of the Strategic Heritage Plan.

CONSERVATION

In line with the Director-General’s emphasis on promoting sustainability and greening operations at UNOG, the Publishing Service has achieved a 100 per cent paperless workflow for the production of parliamentary documents. Digital files of documents are placed on a server, subsequently accessed by the digital printers in the Printing Section, and finally queued for printing as “virtual documents” in a seamless, paperless workflow. The paperless workflow will save the Organization 400,000 sheets of paper per year, and eliminate messenger delivery. Having achieved ISO 14001: 2004 certification in 2010, the Publishing Service is fully committed to the continuous improvement of its operational activities, and the paperless workflow is further evidence of this commitment.