CHAPTER I

FOSTERING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

As the world has seen in 2011, international cooperation is essential in addressing global challenges and achieving common goals. Areas on which the United Nations has been and will continue to be focused in the coming years involve promoting sustainable development; preventing natural and man-made disasters; making the world safer and more secure, through nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for example; helping countries and peoples in transition; and encouraging youth and gender empowerment.

UNOG plays a key role in reaching these goals by serving as a centre through which Member States, United Nations entities, other intergovernmental organizations, research and academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) build partnerships and consensus on today’s critical issues. It also provides indispensable infrastructure, services and facilitation to its many stakeholders to garner support for the work of the Organization.

PROMOTING UNITED NATIONS PRIORITIES

As the second largest duty station in the United Nations system, Geneva plays a critical role in the entire spectrum of United Nations work. UNOG interacts closely with the over 40 United Nations entities in Geneva and is a key facilitator in relations within the Organization and with the broader diplomatic community.

In his role as the Secretary-General’s personal representative, the Director-General engages in regular dialogue with regional groups of Member States in Geneva to promote the priorities of the Secretary-General and to strengthen collaboration. He also frequently represents the Secretary-General at international meetings in the region.

As part of efforts to raise the profile of Geneva as a multilateral hub, the Director-General meets visiting dignitaries to discuss current challenges and to support the formulation of collective, well-coordinated responses to them.
In furtherance of the overall goal of the United Nations to “deliver as one”, UNOG participates in key meetings of the governing boards and plenary sessions of United Nations entities. In addition to representing the Secretary-General at relevant events of United Nations bodies, the Director-General maintains a close working relationship with the executive heads of United Nations entities to help ensure coherence and encourage unity of purpose in pursuit of the Secretary-General’s priorities.

To this same end, the Director-General participates actively in the Secretary-General’s Senior Management Group as well as the Executive Committee for Peace and Security. By bringing together key decision makers from across the United Nations, these two bodies facilitate information-sharing and policy planning on real-time crises and challenges, including, for example, those in Libya and Yemen in 2011.

“[An] exceptional partnership commensurate with the multifaceted ties that unite us.”

Director-General Tokayev in remarks to the Swiss Federal Council, 8 July 2011 (originally in French)

Host country support at all levels – federal, cantonal and municipal – is essential to the success of the work of the United Nations. UNOG continues to reinforce its working relationship with its Swiss host on issues related to protocol, security and safety, as well as other questions affecting United Nations operations. The support Switzerland gives to the many other international organizations that comprise international Geneva is highly valued and appreciated.
PARTNERING WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

As part of the continuous deepening of relations with regional partners, UNOG coordinates United Nations participation in the “Tripartite Process”, convened with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. Established in 1993, the Process builds mutual awareness and facilitates practical collaboration. Thorough review and reform were initiated in 2011 under the chairmanship of the Council. The overhaul is to be concluded in 2012 when UNOG will chair the Process in line with the rotation of the chairmanship.

On 7 September 2011 as a special guest, the Director-General addressed a joint meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the OSCE Permanent Council. In his remarks, the Director-General outlined possibilities for strengthened cooperation between the two organizations in conflict prevention, counter-terrorism, cyber-security, promotion and protection of human rights, and democratization, as well as the need to move ahead on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Director-General’s participation led to a substantive exchange with the OSCE participating States on how to reinforce that cooperation at a practical level.

INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

Drawing on the vast expertise in the academic world of “Intellectual Geneva”, UNOG has developed a close working relationship with think tanks and research institutions in the city. During 2011, UNOG continued to involve these partners in key areas, for example through the convening of joint events that provided opportunities to explore solutions to today’s most pressing challenges. Specific partners included the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), the University of Geneva and the Swiss Network for International Studies.

HIGHLIGHTS OF EVENTS IN 2011 WITH CLOSE UNOG COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION INCLUDED:

- The GCSP–held public discussion, opened by the UNOG Director-General, on developments and implications of missile defence (9 December 2011)
- The UNOG/DCAF-sponsored seminar on privatizing security: international standards and accountability (7 December 2011)
- The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform’s Annual Meeting on political transitions in North Africa and beyond: what the peacebuilding community can contribute (2 December 2011)
- The UNOG–IHEID seminar, “Where is the ‘global’ in global governance?”, part of the co-sponsored luncheon series on challenges in the multilateral system (12 October 2011)

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2011...

UNOG ORGANIZED ACCREDITATION FOR 4,918 NGO AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

UNOG ORGANIZED 47 CIVIL SOCIETY GUIDANCE/ORIENTATION SESSIONS

UNOG HELD 26 CIVIL SOCIETY OUTREACH BRIEFINGS

UNOG FACILITATED 83 MEETINGS OF NGOS ACCREDITED TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
“There can be no success without a healthy civil society.”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

A defining characteristic of 2011 was how civil society shaped global developments through its calls for participation and democracy. By facilitating the contribution of NGOs to the work of the United Nations, UNOG supports the integration of civil society views and voices in the intergovernmental process as determined by Member States.

Highlights of UNOG-civil society collaboration in 2011 included:

- UNOG-NGO Interactive Dialogue: on 31 January 2011, to strengthen the strategic dialogue with civil society, the Director-General held his first-ever direct exchange with NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, centred on the eight priorities of the Secretary-General: inclusive and sustainable development; climate change; empowerment of women; a safer and more secure world; human rights and accountability; humanitarian crisis response; nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation; and strengthening of the United Nations. More than 100 NGO representatives took part in the discussion, which led to a better understanding of the concerns of NGOs and of how civil society can contribute more to advancing the work of the United Nations.

- General Assembly President-NGO Interactive Debate: on 4 July 2011, UNOG hosted an interactive debate between the President of the General Assembly, Joseph Deiss, and civil society in which some 220 participants exchanged views on the role of civil society in global governance.

- Information sessions for NGOs: in early 2011, UNOG launched a series of expert-level information sessions for NGOs focused on current priorities of the United Nations, in particular forthcoming intergovernmental conferences to which NGOs can contribute. Each briefing featured presentations from United Nations officials as well as NGO representatives. Areas discussed during 2011 included the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Rio+20 Conference on sustainable development, the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. These sessions will continue in 2012.

A feedback survey was launched in December 2011 to improve the quality and range of services provided to NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Services will be reviewed on the basis of the survey to respond as effectively as possible to the priorities of civil society within the existing budgetary reality.

**SUPPORTING THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL LAW**

Promotion of the respect for international law remains fundamental to achieving the objectives of the United Nations. UNOG actively supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the rule of law and promote respect for the authority of international treaties and other sources of international law.

The International Law Commission held its sixty-third session in April-June and July-August 2011 at the Palais des Nations. The Legal Liaison Office at UNOG provided administrative support to the Commission to facilitate its work. Discussions at last year’s session focused, inter alia, on the responsibility of international organizations, expulsion of aliens, the obligation to extradite or prosecute, and the protection of persons in the event of disasters. Furthermore, the Commission’s study group on treaties over time, established in 2009, continued its work. A multi-year discussion on reservations to treaties concluded with the adoption of comprehensive guidelines on the subject.

UNOG also organized and hosted the forty-seventh International Law Seminar, designed for postgraduate students in international law, young scholars and government officials exposed to issues of public international law in their work. UNOG called on members of the International Law Commission to invite Governments to make voluntary contributions to the Seminar’s Trust Fund, to enable a number of participants from developing countries to obtain scholarships every year.
“Now it has become clear that the quintessence of security does not lie in nuclear weapons, but in peaceful foreign policy, internal stability and sustainable economic development of a country.”

Director-General Tokayev on International Day against Nuclear Tests
(29 August 2011)

Disarmament and non-proliferation remain indispensable to a security environment favourable to ensuring human development, as enshrined in the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. UNOG is the centre of activity of the international community in this field. It is home to the Conference on Disarmament – the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. Through the Geneva branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), it also provides substantive and organizational support to a wide range of multilateral disarmament agreements and hosts a large number of disarmament-related conferences.

THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

In 2011, the Conference on Disarmament continued its extensive debates on all items on its agenda. It could not agree on a negotiating mandate, however. The level of debate remained high throughout the session, as successive presidents and the membership made genuine efforts to lead the Conference out of its stalemate. The inability of the Conference to rise above its differences represents a cause for grave concern, as it has a direct impact on the efforts of the international community to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The efforts made to break the current impasse were nevertheless a clear testimony to the continued interest of its members to maintain the Conference as the sole multilateral disarmament forum.
“The problem lies not with the vehicle, but with the driver. What is needed most of all is a closer alignment between policy priorities and multilateral disarmament goals.”

Secretary-General of the United Nations to the General Assembly
(27 July 2011)

“A transformed Conference should continue to play an essential role in the future. To that end, all possibilities for its revitalization have to be explored.”

Director-General Tokayev’s Vision Statement (August 2011)

As Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference, the Director-General shared his vision of the work and future of this important body in August 2011. In doing so, he also underscored the efforts of the Secretary-General and those of the General Assembly to revitalize the Conference.

Following the high-level meeting on revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament, held on 24 September 2010, with special focus on the functioning of the Conference, the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters was tasked with undertaking a thorough review of the issues raised. The report of the Board is now with the Secretary-General, who is reviewing its recommendations.

Building on the outcome of the high-level meeting in 2010, and at the request of 49 Member States, the General Assembly convened a plenary meeting from 27 to 29 July 2011 on the follow-up to the high-level meeting held on 24 September 2010. The meeting generated thorough discussion but, unfortunately, did not provide any solutions able break the stalemate. The Assembly has, however, now been seized of the matter and, if the Conference on Disarmament remains deadlocked, is ready to consider other options to move the disarmament agenda forward.

Both the Secretary-General and the Director-General remain firmly committed to restoring the Conference to the central role it can and must play in strengthening the rule of law in the field of disarmament. The Secretary-General has said that it is a “shared responsibility to make the Conference work, not only for us but for future generations”.

A CENTRE FOR MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT EFFORTS

UNOG, as home to the secretariats of a number of key disarmament conventions, serves as a platform for international disarmament efforts. The year 2011 witnessed several important developments in this area, as highlighted below:

| SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS AND THE ARMS TRADE TREATY | Through the Geneva branch of UNODA, UNOG continued to provide Member States with a forum for discussion of salient topics in the area of both small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In addition, the Geneva branch closely followed all Geneva-based activities related to the ATT and the illicit trade in SALW. |
| BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION | The year 2011 concluded with a successful Seventh Review Conference which adopted, by consensus, a series of measures to strengthen the treaty (see Highlights section above for further information). |
| CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS (CCM) | The Geneva branch of UNODA also provided support for the organization of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, which took place in Lebanon from 12 to 16 September 2011. The meeting, aimed at discussing how to enhance the universalization and implementation of the CCM, culminated with the adoption of a political declaration and decisions on the Convention’s implementing architecture, on the work programme for 2012, as well as on the establishment — most probably in 2012 — of a CCM Implementation Support Unit. The meeting welcomed the Beirut Progress Report on the implementation of the 66 concrete steps and goals (actions) contained in the 2010 Vientiane Action Plan. |
| CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS (CCW) | The Fourth Review Conference of the CCW took place at UNOG from 14 to 25 November 2011. Achievements included the adoption of a final declaration that further strengthens the treaty and the decision on an Accelerated Plan of Action on the Universalization of the Convention and its Protocols. The Conference also decided to enhance the implementation of the Convention’s compliance mechanism, and to continue to run the CCW Sponsorship Programme. During the meeting, States also thoroughly debated the issue of cluster munitions and tried to reconcile differing positions by striking a balance between security concerns and humanitarian considerations. Discussions on Protocol V on explosive remnants of war and on Amended Protocol II on mines, booby traps and other explosive devices continued to progress positively. |
DEVELOPING CAPACITY TO ADVANCE DISARMAMENT GOALS

The United Nations Programme of Fellowship on Disarmament, launched by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament in 1978, continues to be supported by UNOG. The Programme provides training and specialization to officials from Member States, particularly from developing countries, to enable them to participate more effectively in international deliberating and negotiating forums.

The Programme began at UNOG in mid-August, with contributions from delegations, institutes and senior United Nations staff as well as with participation in the plenary meetings of the Conference on Disarmament. It then continued with visits to agencies and individual countries and finished with an extended stay at United Nations Headquarters in New York to attend, inter alia, the proceedings of the First Committee of the General Assembly.

The Programme has so far trained 857 officials from 160 Member States, a large number of whom have gone on to hold positions of responsibility within their own Governments in the field of disarmament and international security. In 2011, 25 fellows were selected to participate in the training, 14 of whom were women.

This Programme will contribute over time in a very sustainable and direct manner to a more peaceful and secure world.