2010 Highlights

Throughout 2010, the divisions and services of UNOG have worked in support of the Secretary-General’s priorities through a number of practical projects and activities. This section of the Annual Report presents a selection of achievements from the past year that highlight the different aspects of work at UNOG and illustrate how those aspects each contribute to taking forward the Organization’s overall efforts to overcome global challenges through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

On 24 September 2010, in order to give political impetus to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a ministerial-level meeting in New York on “Revitalizing the work of the Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations”, with significant substantive support provided by UNOG. The meeting provided a unique opportunity to explore ways to revitalize the CD. More than 70 Member States made statements and presented ideas. The Secretary-General urged delegations to recall the status of the CD as the “undisputed home of international arms control efforts”. Many speakers noted that the positive present international climate should give additional impetus to multilateral negotiations aiming at reaching concrete agreements.

On 5 June 2010, the United Nations family in Geneva celebrated World Environment Day and the International Year of Biodiversity. Six thousand five hundred people accepted the invitation to visit Ariana Park, take part in events at the Place des Nations and attend an open day at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Based on an idea from UN Special and led by UNOG in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WIPO, the celebration was made possible through system-wide collaboration with 13 United Nations entities and with financial contributions from the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Italy, as well as Switzerland, the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the City of Geneva, along with the support of many other partners.
The League of Nations archives were entered into the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2009, in recognition of their historical value to the international community. On 28 April 2010, a ceremony celebrated this inscription and the reopening of the League of Nations Museum. The new permanent exhibition in the Museum chronicles the key developments and achievements of the League, with the aim of placing its failures and successes in a broader context. It traces the political activities of the League and its operational work. By presenting the origins of the United Nations, the Museum has placed the work of the Organization in context and illustrated the enduring relevance of its mission.

In line with system-wide efforts towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, the Division of Conference Management (DCM) has implemented an Environmental Management System for its printing and distribution operations, which obtained ISO 14001: 2004 certification in November 2010. The System covers the environmental impact of printing and distribution activities such as material flow, waste material management, secure handling of chemicals, energy consumption and machinery noise levels. It also ensures that staff members maintain a high level of environmental awareness through an environmental policy that details the shared responsibilities of staff, including a commitment to continuous improvement in their work practices.

Following the successful security coverage of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Copenhagen in December 2009, the UNOG Security and Safety Service has continued the planning, organizing and execution of security operations for a number of United Nations external conferences, including UNEP (Sweden), the Internet Governance Forum (Lithuania) and the UNFCCC conferences (China and Germany). The Service also provided key staff to serve in the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Japan from 18 to 29 October 2010 and in the UNFCCC meeting in Cancun, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December. Security procedures developed by the Service have now become standard procedures for the Organization for this type of security operation and this expertise and experience has thus been shared widely throughout the United Nations family.

As part of the efforts to move UNOG towards climate neutrality and greater sustainability in line with the Secretary-General’s priorities, UNOG compiled its first-ever Sustainability Strategy in 2010. This document builds in a systematic manner on the significant achievements of UNOG over the past ten years in reducing electricity, fuel and water consumption through innovative partnerships. The Strategy includes practical measures and recommendations for sustainability gains by reducing the use of paper-based procedures and introducing more effective use of information and communication technology. Emphasis is placed on the role that each individual plays in advancing towards the common goal of greater sustainability by changing habits and making greening a personal priority.