CHAPTER IV

A PLATFORM FOR SHAPING GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

Negotiation, dialogue and the multilateral process — conference management at UNOG provides the machinery to shape global solutions. Throughout 2013, UNOG has adapted and adjusted work processes, practices and procedures to ensure client satisfaction even as demand for conference services continues to outpace available capacity. Communication, quality and quantity, and client orientation are key priorities.

Within the framework of integrated global management of conferences at the United Nations, UNOG remains committed to providing high-quality conference services to all stakeholders. UNOG collaborates with other duty stations for consistent application of United Nations policies and procedures in its conference management work programme.
GLOBAL MEETINGS MANAGEMENT

In 2013, UNOG held regular consultations with United Nations bodies and other duty stations to determine the most suitable dates for conferences and meetings held away from Geneva to maximize the use of permanent resources and facilities. UNOG provided the physical infrastructure, conference coordination and servicing for a set of important meetings, such as talks on the Syrian Arab Republic, discussions on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the auspices of European Union, meetings of the Council of the International Organization for Migration and many others. In 2013, UNOG held regular consultations with United Nations bodies and other duty stations to determine the most suitable dates for conferences and meetings held away from Geneva to maximize the use of permanent resources and facilities. UNOG provided the physical infrastructure, conference coordination and servicing for a set of important meetings, such as talks on the Syrian Arab Republic, discussions on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the auspices of European Union, meetings of the Council of the International Organization for Migration and many others.
UNHCR, UNITAR, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OCHA meetings.

UNOG has been an active participant in the human rights treaty body strengthening process, which the General Assembly took up in 2012 and is scheduled to conclude in 2014. The system, comprising 10 treaty bodies, consumes 30 per cent of UNOG documentation services and continues to grow, with new ratifications. Among the items under discussion are reshaping the entitlements of treaty bodies, including additional meeting time, expanded services such as webcasting, and limiting documentation. The outcome of the process, as well as the previously unfunded universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council, is likely to have broad implications for UNOG and its conference management work programme.

UNOG provides expertise on the logistical and staffing requirements for United Nations conferences to governments that host them. Throughout 2013, UNOG successfully coordinated and provided services to a number of such conferences held outside Geneva (see table below).

### Conferences organized outside Geneva

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), third special session of the Committee on Science and Technology and eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, Bonn</td>
<td>9–12 and 15–19 April 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCCD eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties, Windhoek</td>
<td>16–27 September 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nineteenth session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties, Warsaw</td>
<td>11–22 November 2013</td>
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Meeting the high demand for documentation processing remained challenging in 2013. UNOG worked closely with substantive secretariats to align, as much as possible, deadlines with available capacity. This proactive document management, known as “slotting”, helped focus the limited available capacity on the highest priority requirements. Continued dialogue with Member States to determine priorities is critical in this regard.
CHAPTER IV

MULTILINGUALISM FOR THE FUTURE

In 2013, UNOG focused on keeping its language capacity at a level that guarantees a critical mass of seasoned staff with the optimal set of skills. Within the framework of the United Nations external studies programme, 32 staff members from the six translation sections attended courses to improve or expand their expertise while strengthening contacts with universities.

UNOG also refocused translation resources to more efficiently meet Member State priorities. Summary records of meetings are condensed versions of the meeting proceedings. Existing practices were resource-intensive and often records were issued long after the meeting concluded. In September 2013, the English and French Translation Sections revised and updated procedures to focus on the most important elements of the meeting, thus reducing the number of staff required to draft a record from 5 to 3.5, the length of the record from an average of 15 pages to 10, and the time it took to be issued. For records issued in all six official languages, these new procedures save the equivalent of six days of a translator’s time and a half day of a reviser’s time — over $5,000 per summary record.

CONSTRUCTING TRANSLATION TESTS: KNOWLEDGE-SHARING ACROSS SERVICES, DUTY STATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Recruitment tests play a key role in the selection of language professionals, and there has much demand for the UNOG Languages Service workshop on how to maximize their validity and reliability in line with the latest theories of test construction. Not only has the workshop been given to the translation services at UNOG and United Nations Headquarters, but five one-day versions were arranged in 2013 as the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications joint training ventures hosted by the United Nations Office in Vienna, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the European Commission. These were attended by representatives of 20 different organizations, and more workshops have been requested for 2014.

The Universities Outreach Programme of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management arranged university visits to identify and prepare promising students for competitive examinations for translators. Ten language professionals participated in 19 events in different universities and organizations, offering master classes in United Nations translation for prospective candidates.

UNOG attended the fourth annual workshop for representatives of four universities in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Minsk, held on 19 November 2013 at the United Nations Information Centre in Moscow. During the workshop, UNOG suggested outreach and succession planning activities to fine-tune cooperation with these and other educational institutions, encouraging alignment of their curriculum with United Nations requirements, including language combinations in demand.