2013 HIGHLIGHTS

UNOG divisions and services worked throughout 2013, with partners within and outside the United Nations system, in support of the Secretary-General's priorities. This section presents some highlights of how UNOG contributes to the Organization’s efforts to support a world in transformation. These are all activities that will be continued and strengthened in 2014.

PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR DIPLOMACY AND PEACEMAKING

UNOG has increased its role in peacemaking, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and mediation activities. Critical services were provided to the discussions on the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the talks on the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which culminated in a historic interim agreement on 24 November 2013. UNOG also serves as the venue of a number of ongoing mediation efforts and political negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, including the Geneva International Discussions and the Geneva-based mediation on Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

ADDRESSING NEW DISARMAMENT THREATS

On 15 November 2013, the States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (commonly known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons) agreed on a new mandate to convene at UNOG in 2014 a meeting of experts to discuss questions related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Although fully autonomous weapons systems have never been deployed in warfare, machines that operate without direct human control or supervision may become a reality in the near future. In his message to the States parties, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon explicitly urged them to remain vigilant in addressing the implications of new and emerging weapons and their technologies. In 2014, States are expected to engage in dialogue on all aspects of autonomous weapons systems to better understand their potentially grave humanitarian impact.

SUPPORTING UNITED NATIONS FIELD MISSIONS

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON UNDERREPORTED STORIES

In a densely packed information environment, UN Radio Geneva gives attention to stories that, while they are not making big headlines or being discussed on social media, have important implications for people around the world. Among this year’s stories, UN Radio Geneva reported on the multiple emergency challenges faced in Chad, visiting a United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) nutrition centre and investigating a project that helped women’s associations access water sources. An intensive programme to eradicate polio among nomads by using mobile vaccination teams was the subject of another feature. UN Radio Geneva also heard the voices of refugees displaced by violence in the neighbouring Central African Republic, many of whom lived in the bush or walked for days to reach safe refugee camps. This coverage helps keep such oft-forgotten emergencies in the spotlight.

PARTNERING TO DELIVER “PAPERSMART” CONFERENCES

The Integrated Sustainable PaperSmart Services implemented through the Geneva Technology Centre has had continued success in 2013, in line with the Organization’s “greening” strategy. PaperSmart is a system that efficiently manages paper resources by allowing delegates and staff members to access documents digitally and to print on demand, significantly reducing paper usage. PaperSmart was implemented at the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which took place in Doha from 26 November to 8 December 2012. The United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology in New York developed the technology, while UNOG provided the infrastructure and support to the conference. Eighteen thousand delegates accessed the system, which delivered 10 ready-to-use websites detailing the schedule and programme of meetings, e-forms for electronic devices, recorded speeches and conference documents. The PaperSmart system reduced the paper used during the conference by 2 million sheets (as compared to the previous conference) and was recognized by the Organization in the form of the 2013 UN 21 Award in the category of “Greening the UN.”

Enhancing Security Coordination with the Host Country

A visible representation of the close cooperation between UNOG and the host country on security, 2013 witnessed the full participation of Swiss law enforcement personnel in the Security Certification Programme organized by the Security and Safety Service at UNOG. The learning and certification programme delivers specialized training on safety and security skills through lectures, workshops, practical individual and group exercises, group and forum discussions, case studies and instructor-led simulations. The Chief of the diplomatic unit of the Geneva Police was one of the most active participants, noting that the content of the training had convinced him and he would start applying several methodologies with his team: “From now on, when we prepare the security measures for a visit or an event, we will be speaking the same language.”