CHAPTER II
OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT:
THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Promoting understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations in Geneva and its impact is an important aspect of the work of UNOG, especially in the areas of disarmament, human rights, humanitarian action and development. UNIS, the “voice” of UNOG, promotes public events, supports the media in reporting news, highlights global United Nations campaigns and engages the public in the work of the United Nations family in Geneva.

ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

UNOG provides an array of services to help journalists report on the work of the United Nations. In 2013, UNOG accredited 1,044 foreign correspondents, television crews, and media organizations from every continent. From headline-making news and the latest developments in United Nations field missions to hidden stories and in-depth features, UNOG supports the media in all aspects of its work.

Biweekly press briefings are a vital opportunity for the United Nations to speak with one voice, as spokespersons for all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Geneva come to the Palais des Nations to brief journalists. Increasingly, United Nations field staff and senior personnel, such as the special representatives of the Secretary-General, also take the opportunity, when in Geneva, to speak to the Geneva press corps about the situation on the ground, for instance, concerning the refugee crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In addition, UNOG facilitates and organizes press conferences year-round for United Nations entities, as well as permanent missions and organizations such as ICRC. Support is also provided to the permanent press corps in the form of workspace, telephone lines, mailboxes, television and radio studio space and other services.
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DID YOU KNOW?
In 2013, UNOG:

WELCED 103,868 VISITORS TO THE PALAIS DES NATIONS

ORANIZED 235 PRESS CONFERENCES

PUBLISHED 1,624 PRESS RELEASES IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

ORANIZED 73 INFORMATION AND 2 SEMINAR PROGRAMMES

MADE FREELY AVAILABLE 6,932 PHOTOGRAPHS

ACCCREDITED 392 PERMANENT AND 652 TEMORARY AD HOC CORRESPONDENTS

INFORMATION-SHARING AND OUTREACH

Working with schools, youth groups, academia, permanent missions, NGOs and the very active international community in Geneva, UNOG delivers multilingual, informative and engaging events such as panel discussions, lectures and ceremonies that educate participants about the United Nations.

One example of reaching out to new audiences was the participation of UNOG in the International Geneva exhibits at the Geneva Autumn Fair in November 2013, displaying photos, films and publications on United Nations activities.

Public information diffused by the United Nations is not only limited to news and campaigns. It is also about remembering the past and educating future generations so they learn from the lessons of history. In 2013, UNOG organized ceremonies to mark the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust and the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

#TheWorldNeedsMore was the hashtag for this year’s World Humanitarian Day, which also marked the tenth anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing, a day commemorated in several ways at UNOG, with moving speeches and a candle-lighting ceremony, a live link to a ceremony in New York and a lively OCHA social media campaign featuring a blimp flying above the Palais. At a ceremony for the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, young people spoke of the hardship endured by those living in the margins of society.

For Nelson Mandela International Day, UNOG screened three films about his lifetime of work for equality and the opportunities he made possible for youth in the townships of South Africa. Following his passing on 5 December 2013, UNOG held a commemoration on 17 December 2013 to honour one of the giants of our time.
VISITS

More than 100,000 people took a guided tour of the Palais des Nations in 2013, and were inspired by its impressive architecture and rich history. Guided tours are provided in 12 languages, led by 25 tour guides. The three thematic tours — on the history of the League of Nations, the art and architecture of the Palais, and the history, flora and donations of Ariana Park — were also popular with visitors seeking more specialized information.

Guided tours of the UNOG Library have become another outreach vehicle, specifically to students who often use them as a prelude to longer stays for research purposes. Highlights of the tour are the 10 floors of book and document stacks, the visit of the League of Nations Museum and book exhibitions, such as “Inspirational leaders, inspirational books”. In 2013, more than 1,800 people from all over the world participated in the tours.

TELEVISION AND RADIO

UNTV cameras captured peacemaking activities in Geneva, as 2013 was marked by an increase in live coverage of major events. Press conferences by the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi, Security Council Foreign Ministers, Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, as well as Human Rights Council debates and discussions on humanitarian assistance, were broadcast and webcast.

Leading television stations and websites throughout the world broadcast live coverage by UNTV and UN Radio Geneva of high-level political meetings and the day-to-day activities of the United Nations, and used edited sections in their news programmes. More television journalists took news stories directly from the UNOG FTP server, increasing distribution. UNOG also continued to transmit television stories through UNifeed at United Nations Headquarters and partner Eurovision, as well as to provide studio and transmission facilities for external use.

Leading United Nations newsmakers used UNOG studios to talk about the Organization’s work through live and recorded interviews with broadcasters in different parts of the world. UNOG combines traditional and new media, and in one recent innovation, its webcasts of meetings such as the Human Rights Council were made available on mobile devices.
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OUTREACH ON THE WEB

The UNOG website (www.unog.ch) and social media were increasingly important outreach tools in 2013. The charts below show a continuous increase in the number of website visitors from 2008 to the present.

Social media

Social media is the only media form that is not just interactive but positively demands a two-way conversation. We therefore embrace our followers!

By the end of 2013, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube were well integrated into the communications landscape of every United Nations organization in Geneva. UNOG-chaired meetings of the United Nations Communications Group on social media, and its social media outlets communicated news, campaigns, speeches, events, meetings and major events.

By the end of 2013, the @UNGeneva Twitter account had 30,200 followers, the UN Geneva Facebook page had almost 9,000 ‘likes’. Videos uploaded in 2013 to our YouTube account had been viewed 2,403 times and our Flickr page has received a record 2,330,000 views since its launch.

Twitter at the Geneva Peace Talks, 20 September 2013 (UN Photo/ODG)