The year 2011 was marked by powerful transformations. Around the globe, and most dramatically in the Arab world, people demanded freedom from oppression and better opportunities for themselves and their families. Often at considerable risk, they stood up for democracy, human rights and equality. In Africa, after decades of civil war and a peaceful United Nations-supported referendum, South Sudan became the 193rd Member State of the United Nations.

Elsewhere, the global financial and economic crisis cast its shadow widely. Natural and man-made disasters devastated lives and communities, from the worst earthquake in Japan’s history, which triggered a nuclear crisis at Fukushima, to a severe drought across East Africa. Throughout the year, the United Nations, its Member States, and the international community at large worked together to respond to these and other global challenges.

In addition, the birth of the world’s seventh billion person reminded all of us of the inexorable, critical need for sustainability. Saving the planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth, building a peaceful future – these separate challenges came together in that one birth. The importance of implementing measures that deal effectively with the urgent social, economic, environmental and security challenges of our time cannot be understated. Efforts to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament intensified – a key priority – as it remains the sole multilateral disarmament forum. In 2011 within the United Nations, especially in the context of the economic realities facing Member States, there was also increased focus on reform and enhancing effectiveness.

The developments of 2011 pointed time and again to the inescapable need for the international community to meet these challenges together, through increased and innovative partnerships. Indeed, the representative office of the Secretary-General in Switzerland, the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), serves as a multilateral hub where stakeholders come together. Throughout 2011, as will be seen in these pages, emergency meetings of the Human Rights Council on Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, efforts to curb biological and conventional weapons, attempts to further codify international law, debates on global health issues, and negotiations on trade and development, to name only a few, have animated the Palais des Nations. In every case, the staff of UNOG worked behind the scenes, quietly and professionally, in support of the international community’s desire to act.

Furthermore, UNOG continued to “enable the enablers” by providing essential services to other parts of the United Nations family so that they might pursue their life-saving mandates. In 2011, UNOG staff provided security and safety services to the Commission of Inquiry on Libya, interpretation and translation to the Secretary-General in Ethiopia and nine human rights field missions, and key administrative and other services to the over 40 United Nations entities in Geneva and beyond.

In my first year here in Geneva, I am proud of what UNOG accomplished in 2011, yet deeply conscious that our beneficiaries, partners and clients require more of us. As we move forward, and on the basis of the five “generational opportunities” identified by the Secretary-General at the outset of his second term, the work of the United Nations will remain essential to meeting the global challenges lying ahead. On behalf of all my colleagues here at UNOG, we are committed to working cooperatively with both current and future partners to ensure effectiveness, accountability and excellence as we face the future together.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev
Director-General
United Nations Office at Geneva
DID YOU KNOW?

In 2011...

- **1,550** staff, representing **118** nationalities were working at UNOG
- **9,528** staff were working for the United Nations system in Geneva
- **59** United Nations offices, departments, and other entities received administrative and other support services from UNOG
- The Palais des Nations welcomed **97,192** visitors
- **184** permanent missions, permanent observer missions and permanent observer offices were accredited to UNOG
- UNOG held or serviced **9,962** meetings and translated **232,533** pages
- **248** press conferences were held, **1,584** press releases/meeting summaries were issued and **230** journalists were accredited to UNOG
- The UNOG website was visited **1,156,466** times
- **99** cultural events were organized, promoting the heritage and culture of more than **110** member states and conveying key messages about the work of the United Nations around the world
- **369,610** library and archive information resources were consulted, either in person at the UNOG library or by users online
- **660** courses and training workshops were attended by **9,330** participants

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1 Figure for 2011 provided through the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.