The year 2010 marked the sixty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. The need for strong multilateral governance, with the United Nations at the core, is as great today as when the Organization was founded for us to overcome shared challenges.

Across the world, far too many are caught in violent conflict. Ever-rising military expenditure and the lack of multilateral strategic disarmament generate instability and drain resources. Inequality is on the rise, among and within countries. Despite progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty remains entrenched five years before the deadline for their realization expires. Many people live in fear of losing their livelihood as economic recovery remains fragile. Human rights abuses continue to undermine the dignity of fellow human beings. Our changing climate puts vulnerable populations even further at risk. Common to all of these challenges is the fact that people look to the United Nations for solutions. It is our collective responsibility to live up to their expectations.
While the need for a strong United Nations at the heart of the multilateral system remains unchanged, the challenges faced have grown in complexity and scope over the past 65 years. They cannot be dealt with by any one nation or any one organization alone. The importance of inclusive partnerships that maximize individual strengths, build on comparative advantages and create new synergies was a common theme for Member States at the sixty-fifth General Assembly of the United Nations. Increasingly, we need to forge and nurture partnerships with our stakeholders – other international and regional organizations, civil society, the research and academic community, and the private sector – in the conceptualization and implementation of our responses to the challenges before us.

As the representative office of the Secretary-General in Switzerland, the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) serves as a dynamic multilateral hub that brings together these stakeholders in a partnership to overcome our global challenges.

As a platform for multilateral diplomacy, UNOG enables Member States and partners to discuss and craft policies and plans that target current priorities. As a service provider, UNOG works with the wider United Nations system to support the development and implementation of reforms aimed at continuously making the Organization more modern, responsive, flexible and effective. Connecting with the stakeholder communities through outreach and communication activities, UNOG contributes to raising awareness of the role of the United Nations and helps to build alliances of support to overcome the challenges ahead. By enabling cultural exchange and interaction, UNOG contributes to foster the mutual understanding and respect that is the indispensable foundation for peace and progress.

Building on past achievements, UNOG has throughout 2010 strengthened its contribution to the United Nations' collective efforts for a better world. As mandates and workloads continue to grow, we work to maintain the quality and reach of services at the highest possible level within the constraints of budgetary realities. By adapting practices and procedures, we strive to ensure the greatest degree of sustainability in our activities. We remain committed to the preservation of the Palais des Nations as the emblematic and effective platform for today’s multilateral efforts.

As the world’s only global organization, the United Nations enjoys the highest legitimacy through its inclusiveness and broad agenda. This moral authority of the United Nations needs to be matched by adequate mechanisms and resources that will enable effective responses to current challenges. Partnerships are key to continued achievement. As we take forward our efforts in support of the priorities of Member States, we will work to enhance and expand these partnerships.

Sergei A. Ordzhonikidze
Director-General
United Nations Office at Geneva