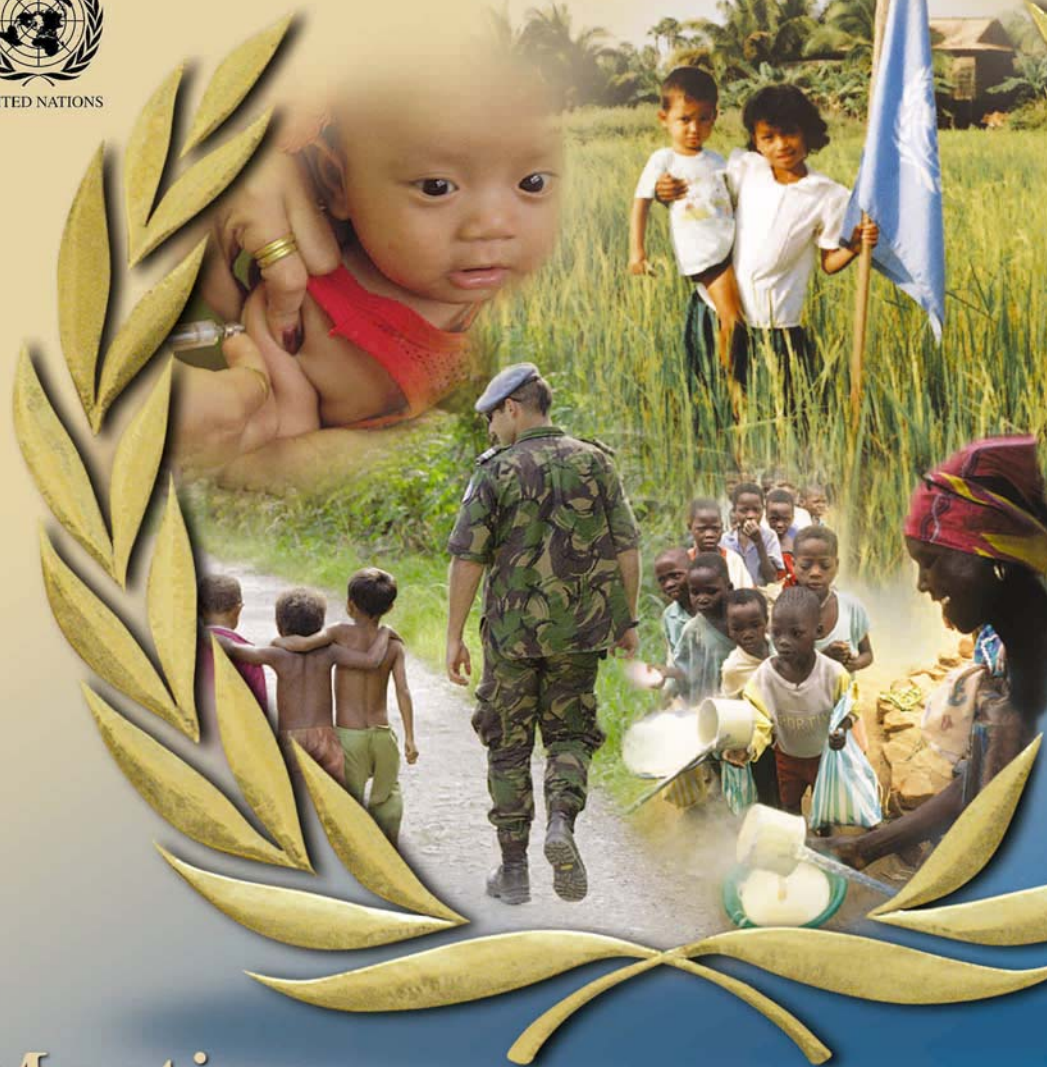




UNITED NATIONS



# Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

2004

**Sergei Ordzhonikidze**  
*Director-General*

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

→→→→→→→→→→ 2004

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**Sergei Ordzhonikidze**  
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# Meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century



**T**he world faces an unprecedented range of threats and challenges. International terrorist attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spectre of the acquisition of such weapons by terrorist networks, and prolonged violent conflicts in many parts of the world challenge our system of collective security. Continuing humanitarian crises, systematic violations of human rights, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases are at once both results of instability and contributing factors to conditions of insecurity. Extreme poverty contributes to failing States that subsequently may be prone to conflict and can provide a breeding ground for terrorist activity. These threats and challenges are closely interlinked, and may be the causes and consequences of insecurity. We cannot address them separately.

As we approach the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we need to assess our progress towards meeting these challenges and focus on how we can strengthen efforts to maintain international peace and security, promote fundamental rights and implement sustainable development. It is now that the international community must decide how to move forward, and firm decisions must be taken to define the steps needed to address these challenges.

In 2005, nations will gather to review the progress of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, wherein states described the United Nations as the “indispensable common house of the entire human family”, and reaffirmed their commitment to fighting injustice, terror, crime and poverty, whilst protecting our heritage for future generations. At this high-level event, the international community will assess our problems and achievements. Yet, the significant steps made will also further highlight how far we have to go. Obstacles to achieving the goals of the Declaration are varied, but not insurmountable. The knowledge and resources exist; we need to put them to use more effectively.

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Moving our world towards greater stability and democracy requires a set of norms – a standard by which there is accountability. If our responses to the pressing challenges are to be effective, they must be firmly placed within the framework of international law. This fundamental framework is an important achievement and a precious foundation of international cooperation that protects States – big and small – and individuals – poor and wealthy.

The United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) continues to contribute to these overall efforts of the Organization. As one of the largest and busiest conference centres in the world, UNOG is central to international dialogue in the pursuit of peace and development. The Secretary-General has actively used UNOG and Switzerland as a platform for progress, specifically addressing social and economic needs, rendering his good offices and presiding over the resolution of disputes, and UNOG continues to provide support for his efforts.

Successful advancement is made through acknowledging and learning from experience. It is through constant evolution and change that we are able to turn rhetoric into reality. The United Nations therefore strives to constantly develop and adapt to better serve the international community. The successful implementation of reform initiatives is achievable through the collective commitment of Member States, as well as from within the United Nations system. UNOG has made significant strides in fulfilling the reform proposals outlined by the Secretary-General two years ago in his report “Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change”. This is evidence of a work in progress to which we are fully committed.

The need for an effective multilateral institution to address the needs of humanity in an era of globalization is more acute than ever before. The legitimacy of the United Nations is unique. As each part of the system continues to strive forward, the United Nations Office at Geneva hereby accounts for its role in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.



Sergei Ordzhonikidze  
Under-Secretary-General  
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva



# I Interdependent problems: collective solutions

The challenges of the twenty-first century cut across all boundaries and affect people regardless of nationality, ethnicity and creed. Confronting them requires both a global vision and a global means of action. Open and direct exchanges amongst all stakeholders within a multilateral framework are therefore essential to strengthening our collective responses.

## Supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General

As the representative office of the Secretary-General in Geneva, UNOG extended full support to the Secretary-General during his visits to Switzerland in 2004 to promote several projects for economic and social development and provide his good offices for conflict resolution. Through the Protocol and Liaison Service, the Director-General took responsibility for the entire logistical preparation for the Secretary-General's six visits in the last year. Through the United Nations Information Service (UNIS), full press and media coverage of these trips was provided. UNOG is proud to play a role in supporting Headquarters and the work of the Office of the Secretary-General in spearheading the Organization.

During the Secretary-General's visit to Geneva from 8 to 11 December 2003 for the purpose of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), UNOG rendered considerable assistance, personnel, advice and media coverage to support the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Swiss authorities, who jointly organized the Summit.

At the beginning of the year, the Secretary-General travelled to Davos for three days (22-25 January) to attend the World Economic Forum where he delivered a keynote address in which he highlighted the "uncertainty about the very survival of our global order".



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Between 30 January and 1 February, two important meetings took place at the Palais des Nations at the level of head of State. Both meetings highlighted key aspects of the United Nations' work: economic development and diplomatic negotiations, as facilitated by the good offices of the Secretary-General. Firstly, the Secretary-General lent support to the initiative by Brazil to fight poverty and hunger, by joining President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, President Jacques Chirac of France and President Ricardo Lagos Escobar of Chile at the Palais des Nations on 30 January 2004. A joint declaration issued at the end of the meeting was a positive step in addressing the issue of poverty and development, one of the key challenges of our time.

On 31 January 2004 the Secretary-General chaired a joint meeting with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Paul Biya of Cameroon to continue rendering his good offices concerning the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, and to discuss follow-up to the 2002 International Court of Justice ruling on their land and maritime boundary dispute. The Secretary-General praised the two national leaders for their "incredible leadership" in agreeing to abide by the Court's decision before it was rendered, and then by setting up mechanisms for its smooth implementation.

From 27 March to 1 April 2004, the Secretary-General travelled to Bürgenstock, Switzerland, where the latest stage of negotiations on his plan to reunify Cyprus before its entry into the European Union on 1 May got under way.

On 7 April, the Palais des Nations was the central point from which the world marked the horrific genocide in Rwanda ten years ago. In a positive move forward, the Secretary-General launched an Action Plan to Prevent Genocide in his address to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on the same day. The Secretary-General also announced the creation of a new post of Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide who would report through him to the Security Council.

### **Protecting our future through acknowledging the past**

While we address the multiple challenges of our day, it is important to remember our past, from which we derive invaluable experiences to enrich our capacity to move forward. When acknowledging past tragedies, such as the Rwandan Genocide or the 19 August 2003 bombing against the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, the Secretary-General aspires to draw from these experiences in order to better address the challenges of today.



On 19 August 2004, the Secretary-General led from Geneva the commemoration ceremonies to mark the first anniversary of the bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. UNOG planned and organized, with the support of the Swiss authorities and in conjunction with United Nations offices in London, New York and the Middle East, to bring high-ranking United Nations and government officials together with all survivors, injured victims and families of the 22 colleagues who were killed in the bombing. This attack against the United Nations irrevocably changed the path of the Organization, as the United Nations became a direct target of political violence. The tragedy changed the nature of the challenges faced by the United Nations and now forces the Organization to address the security of staff as never before.

### Multilateral cooperation and representation

As an established centre of multilateral diplomacy, UNOG facilitated the visits of many heads of State and government, cabinet ministers and other high-level dignitaries who travelled to the Palais des Nations to participate in international negotiations and discussions in 2004.

#### High-level visits to UNOG – 2004

Personalities	Number of visits
Secretary-General	6
Deputy-Secretary-General	1
Presidents, vice-presidents and heads of State	15
Prime ministers and deputy prime ministers	8
Ministers of foreign affairs	75
Ministers and secretaries of State	198
Other dignitaries	17
<b>Total number of visits as of 3 September 2004</b>	<b>317</b>

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The Director-General conducted bilateral exchanges with many of these key policy and decision makers in order to promote the Organization's work and to share information in support of the Secretary-General's efforts in spearheading the United Nations' path towards addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

As the challenges facing the international community are closely connected, responses need to cut across institutional boundaries. Engagement with international policy and decision makers is thus complemented by close cooperation and information sharing within the Organization. UNOG participates at both the executive management level with Headquarters as well as the inter-agency level between the various bodies of the Organization. The Director-General contributes to the wider policy planning processes through video-link participation in the weekly meetings of the Senior Management Group and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, two fora that include the most senior level international civil servants of the United Nations who gather to exchange views and to formulate policy on important issues before the Organization. Additionally, UNOG continues to liaise with Geneva-based United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds, and participates regularly at Executive Board meetings and inter-agency gatherings of these entities in order to contribute to facilitating inter-agency cooperation.

The Director-General accompanied the Secretary-General as a Senior Adviser on a number of political missions, including an official visit to Belgium and the institutions of the European Union in January 2004, and to the Russian Federation in April 2004. Representing the Secretary-General at several large international gatherings, including at the Eighth St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the International Organization for Standardization, and the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, enabled the Director-General to present the vision of the Secretary-General beyond United Nations Headquarters.

### **Partnering with regional organizations**

In line with the Secretary-General's policy of closer and more effective cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as provided for by Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, UNOG contributes to



facilitating cooperation with regional organizations, particularly in the European context. The expertise and experience of regional organizations in addressing, at the regional level, the multidimensional challenges of the twenty-first century is a valuable complement to the global efforts of the United Nations.

Together with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, UNOG is a member of the “tripartite process”. These annual informal consultations represent a useful mechanism for information sharing and exchanging of views intended to contribute to greater efficiency in carrying out the mandates of the individual organizations, and to allow for a coordinated approach on issues of mutual interest. This mechanism is a good example of how the United Nations and regional organizations may coordinate more effectively their efforts to resolve important, interrelated issues of peace, security and development. It thus contributes to the ongoing strengthening of relations between the United Nations and regional partners.

In February 2004, the Director-General participated in the eleventh annual two-day “tripartite” consultations as head of the United Nations delegation. Representatives from the United Nations family and related bodies included the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, the International Organization for Migration and the International Committee of the Red Cross also attended the meeting, which was chaired by the OSCE. As per past practice, the annual gathering was divided into a high-level and a working-level segment.

The high-level meeting focused on threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century and on cooperation in the field. Addressing the increasing threat posed by global terrorism, participants underlined the need for a common and effective action, highlighting the importance of preventive measures to counter international terrorism. Emphasizing the link between long-term development and conflict prevention, participants noted that a

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comprehensive approach to security was vital in tackling the threats to security and stability in the twenty-first century. In this regard, the Millennium Development Goals were recognized as a framework for cooperation.

The expert-level target-oriented meeting examined the activities of, and cooperation between, partner international organizations in the Southern Caucasus. In these working-level discussions, participants reiterated the importance of coherent and coordinated approaches among international players and with local authorities in the Southern Caucasus, acknowledged the need to improve interaction in the field and welcomed more systematic exchanges at headquarters level, based on a flexible and pragmatic approach.

In addition to the consultations within the framework of the “tripartite process”, the Director-General maintains bilateral contacts with the membership of a number of regional organizations.

## **Evolving and reforming**

Continuously adapting the Organization to keep pace with evolving realities in international relations is critical to meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. UNOG is therefore committed to supporting the Secretary-General’s ongoing reform efforts and continues to strive to implement all relevant reform initiatives in a timely manner. In this regard, UNOG contributed to raising awareness of the scope and modalities of United Nations reform through hosting a seminar for Swiss parliamentarians on the issue, organized by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Swiss Parliament at the initiative of the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. The Director-General addressed the delegates conveying the vision of the Secretary-General to representatives of the host country.

In 2004, UNOG provided important logistical and other support to the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change whose task it is to assess the threats to international peace and security in the twenty-first century and to recommend changes necessary to ensuring that the United Nations remains a key tool for effectively addressing these challenges.



## **II** Securing our world through disarmament efforts

Security is crucial to progress. New security threats, including international terrorism, as underscored by Security Council resolutions 1267, 1373, 1526, 1540 and 1566 for example, challenge our collective security and undermine efforts to achieve lasting development. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials not only increases the risk of their use by States but also of their acquisition and use by terrorist groups.

Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation are indispensable tools for creating a security environment favourable to ensuring human development. Moreover, they are an essential contribution to the global fight against terrorism as they reduce the risk of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, radioactive materials and the means of delivery.

### **Negotiating through a unique forum**

UNOG is the home of the Conference on Disarmament – the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body – and hosts a large number of disarmament-related conferences. Thus, UNOG remains a crucial focal point of international diplomacy in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Director-General of UNOG is also Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference.

This year, the Conference on Disarmament benefited from high-level discussions where foreign ministers expressed concern over the continuing impasse, but at the same time, voiced strong political support for the

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Conference. Additional efforts were made to broaden the support for an agreement on a programme of work. Meanwhile, the Conference focused on other ways of facilitating the substantive work through conducting a series of informal plenary meetings on each agenda item. In general, members of the Conference shared the view that these meetings were useful and constructive. Additionally, the Conference was able to take a notable decision to enhance the engagement of civil society in its work.

The third part of this year's session was marked by a long-awaited revised proposal on launching negotiations in the Conference on a legally binding treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. A proposal to negotiate a ban on the sale and export of persistent landmines was followed by the presentation of ideas on the future treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as an analysis of the existing international legal regimes relevant to this future treaty.

Discussions on "new and additional issues" of relevance to the current international security environment, such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, compliance with arms control disarmament agreements, and also protection of "critical infrastructure" was aimed at making the Conference more responsive to new security challenges.

### **Disarmament machinery in the working**

This year will witness the First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The Convention has experienced unparalleled success in reducing the stocks and use of anti-personnel landmines, as well as in supporting the victims of these inhumane weapons, but much more remains to be done. To date, 143 nations have joined the Convention and more than 30 million landmines have been destroyed.

Intensive efforts within the Group of Governmental Experts of 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 (CCW), have resulted in the adoption at the 2003 Meeting of States Parties of a new international legally binding instrument – the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, annexed to the Convention. This new Protocol is aimed at reducing the humanitarian hazard posed to civilians by unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war.



Moreover, the Meeting of the States Parties decided that the Group of Governmental Experts should maintain its work in 2004. Accordingly, the Group continued to consider proposals and ideas on the issue of Mines Other than Anti-personnel Mines put forward since the establishment of the Group with the aim of elaborating appropriate recommendations for submission to the next Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention. The Group also considered the implementation of existing principles of international humanitarian law and further studied possible preventive measures aimed at improving the design of certain specific types of munitions, including sub-munitions.







## **III** Collaboration and engagement

**U**NOG continues to work closely with the diplomatic community in Geneva to enhance the working conditions of resident diplomats and visiting delegations with a view to strengthening the multilateral process. To this end, the Director-General meets on a regular basis with permanent representatives of the regional groups for informal discussions on issues of mutual interest and concern. Such consultations enable a constructive exchange of views that may help guide a continuous strengthening of working relations between Member States and UNOG.

Throughout 2004, UNOG provided extensive assistance and advice on protocol matters to the host country, and the specialized agencies, as well as to the 158 Permanent Missions of the United Nations Member States based in Geneva. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) also solicited its assistance and expertise during their respective conferences at the Palais des Nations.

### **Maintaining host country relations**

On the Secretary-General's behalf, the Director-General continued to maintain and enhance close partnerships with the host country at all levels. In September 2004, in the context of regular bilateral exchanges, the Director-General met with Ms. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, for discussions on issues of mutual interest, including political, security and development matters as well as host country relations.

The Office of the Director-General continued to maintain excellent working relations with the authorities of the host country both at the cantonal and the federal level. It closely collaborated with them with a view to ensuring the successful functioning of numerous international conferences, both in and out of the Palais des Nations.

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At the first annual meeting of the Diplomatic Committee held in September 2004, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Jean Simplicie Ndjemba Endezoomou of Cameroon, the Office provided logistical support to this important Committee, which constantly seeks to find durable solutions to the multifaceted concerns of the diplomatic community in Geneva, with the close collaboration both of UNOG and the host country.

Additionally, the Office of the Director-General is central to the uniform application of the Host Country Agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the United Nations, including coordination on all questions of a United Nations system-wide relevance among legal advisers of the United Nations specialized agencies in Geneva.

### **Supporting the framework of international law**

Whilst the decision-making process continues, policy makers strive to advance towards the common vision of a better world where “no one is above the law, and no one should be denied its protection”. The Secretary-General’s opening remarks at this year’s General Assembly reiterated the importance of respect for law, placing it high on the agenda of the international community and the Organization for the twenty-first century.

One of the principal bodies set up to ensure that this goal is addressed is the International Law Commission, established by the General Assembly in 1947, as one of the instruments used for the progressive development and codification of international law. Its work involves the meticulous preparation of draft conventions that are used as the basis for international treaties. To facilitate the work of the Commission, UNOG provides extensive support, through the Legal Liaison Office, to the annual session held in Geneva.

Additionally, the Legal Liaison Office also provides guidance to the Director-General concerning legal policy questions in relation to all activities, contacts and statements, as well as representational functions. As part of the Office of the Director-General, they further extend their expertise to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), OHCHR, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), as well as to other consultative bodies and sectors internal to the United Nations.



## Connecting with civil society

The engagement of civil society has long been respected by the United Nations as a driving force in the global development agenda. In his report to the fifty-seventh General Assembly, the Secretary-General highlighted the engagement of civil society as an aspect of the United Nations reform process and pledged to assemble a group of eminent persons to be known as the Secretary-General's "Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations" to review past and current practices, and submit a set of recommendations for a more meaningful interaction with civil society.

In December 2003, the second meeting of the Panel was held at the Palais des Nations, and, with the support of UNOG, the Panel was able to conduct consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, as well as with NGO focal points within other agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations.

In June 2004, UNOG again provided support for the launch of the final report of the Secretary-General's Panel, which examined current practices and produced a set of recommendations oriented to reinforce interactions between the Organization and civil society. In this connection, Geneva had the benefit of the presence of Ms. Malini Mehra (India), Ambassador André Erdős (Hungary) and Mr. Bagher Asadi (Iran) who served as members of the panel, which was chaired by Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former President of Brazil.

In accordance with its mandate, UNOG facilitated the participation of NGOs having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in holding meetings at the Palais des Nations. Currently, more than 2,600 NGOs have obtained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Through numerous meetings, information sessions and debates, UNOG continued to work to inform civil society of the various mechanisms concerning engagement with the United Nations in order for them to participate more actively in this process. Approximately 19,000 representatives from NGOs are accredited each year to participate in meetings held at UNOG.

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Over the last few decades, the United Nations has accomplished considerable progress as regards partnerships and dialogue with civil society and NGOs. The programme of reforms of the Organization launched by the Secretary-General recommends the reinforcement of the contributions of civil society to multilateral debates.

### Utilizing expert experience

Policy development and priority setting needs to be based on fresh, forward-looking analysis to be effective in responding to today's complex challenges. Action requires research and reflection. In line with the Secretary-General's reform efforts, UNOG therefore contributes to facilitating partnerships between the research and academic community and the Geneva-based United Nations family. By fostering contacts, promoting networks and hosting inclusive debates, UNOG contributes to further strengthening this critical link between policy and research.

In partnership with the United Nations University, UNOG hosts the annual Geneva Research and Policy Dialogue (GRPD). Bringing together representatives of departmental policy planning units, offices, funds, programmes and research entities within the United Nations system, as well as external partners, the GRPD contributes to a coordinated approach to United Nations priorities. The presentations and debate revolve around the current preoccupations of the Organization to stimulate creative thinking and serve reform efforts and policy planning.

The fifth GRPD was held at the Palais des Nations from 26 to 27 October 2004. Participants presented projects concerning new security threats and disarmament, good governance and reconciliation in post-conflict situations, and environment and sustainable development. Given that in 2005 the General Assembly will carry out a review of the progress achieved in implementing the Millennium Declaration commitments, the aim was for the GRPD discussions to feed into that process.

UNOG continued its annual seminar series, hosted jointly with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). This ongoing collaboration is an example of how UNOG builds results-oriented partnerships



with the think-tanks and the wider research community in Geneva. The 2004 Seminar, co-chaired by the Director-General and the Director of DCAF, was entitled “State and Human Security in the ‘Age of Terrorism’: The Role of Security Sector Reform”. This event brought together over 80 Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, experts working in the field of security sector reform and Geneva-based academics who collectively analysed the linkages between State and human security in different regional contexts: Africa, the Middle East and West Asia, and the Western Balkans. In this regard, the Seminar capitalized on Geneva’s efforts to focus attention on human-centred security.

Presentations and follow-up discussions centred on the application of security sector reform with a view to formulating practical suggestions that may encourage and guide future security sector reform work. The open debate clearly underlined the importance of security sector reform in ensuring both human and State security in the current international context. Participants underlined the importance of a holistic approach and of coordinated efforts at the national, regional and international levels in pursuing security sector reform. The need to consider modalities for effectively combating drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime as part of security sector reform, in particular at the regional level, was also highlighted. As part of the ongoing efforts by UNOG to bring the analysis and assessments made at the Seminar to a wide audience so that they may contribute to enhancing security sector reform efforts, a selection of edited presentations has been compiled and published.

Building on these efforts, UNOG and DCAF are planning a third annual seminar, scheduled to take place at the beginning of 2005. Drawing on the particular experience of the United Nations in post-conflict contexts, the seminar will examine the role of the Organization in post-conflict security sector reform.

UNOG also continued its cooperation with the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN), which promotes results-oriented and practical research that can be applied to, and inform the work of, international organizations. Serving as observer ex officio on the GIAN Foundation Board, the Director-General contributes to the Network’s efforts.

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In June 2004, the Director-General addressed the Annual Meeting of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, which was organized in collaboration with GIAN and took place for the first time in Geneva. Under the topic "Human Security: Issues, Linkages and Challenges", participants analysed the new concept of human security and the practical challenges that it poses.

UNOG also continued to maintain fruitful working-level contacts with other members of the research community in Geneva.



## IV Reaching our global constituency

Global support for the work of the United Nations in addressing world issues of international peace and security is crucial to these efforts. As the United Nations works to make progress towards a more peaceful and just world, communication with the stakeholders, ranging from world leaders to the general public, is crucial to its success. Reaching our global constituents is impossible without the engagement of the international media. Public outreach serves two purposes. Through independent reporting the peoples of the world are informed of the work of the Organization and the voice of the people can be utilized to influence the actions of Member States. Through independent reporting the world is able to assess the productivity of the United Nations, and thus the commitment of Member States to the Organization they founded.

For the international media, change is news. Accurate and impartial reporting serves to channel communication to those who need to be reached, it serves to educate, it serves to build confidence, and it serves to correct misperceptions. UNOG assists this process through providing the necessary support to the international media so they may fulfil their responsibilities in the most skilled manner.

### Reporting the facts

The United Nations Information Service (UNIS) at Geneva is one of the information centres that has remained functioning following the closure of many United Nations Information Centres in an effort to increase cost effectiveness. Based in the heart of Europe, Geneva attracts an assorted range of accredited media whose tasks include informing the public of the activities of the United Nations in Switzerland.



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The Service gives accreditation to approximately 200 resident correspondents on a permanent basis, and several hundred on temporary assignment. UNIS also liaises closely with the public information services of other United Nations agencies and programmes to provide a comprehensive overview of activities in Geneva, allowing the media to appreciate the Organization as a whole and complete system, sharing the same goals and vision.

The international press is kept abreast of new developments through bi-weekly briefings by UNOG, as well as other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Additionally UNIS organizes individual press conferences on a variety of issues with visiting officials and experts, preparing background papers and profiles to ensure that journalists are well informed. Coverage of the Conference on Disarmament, the Commission on Human Rights and all meetings of human rights treaty bodies are also provided.

The last year saw a total of 273 of these targeted press conferences. However, this was not the only medium used to transmit information. UNIS produced and distributed some 1,500 press releases in English and French, produced television, radio and photographic material, provided studio facilities to accredited correspondents, and maintained a documentation centre to support the work of international journalists.

In order to ensure balanced coverage of all points of view, the Information Service also provides support to the 250 locally based NGOs and several hundred more who come to attend meetings in Geneva, by organizing specialized briefings on a variety of issues, in particular during the annual session of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Over the last year Geneva was the venue for a number of high-level meetings on an array of topics related to the Millennium Development Goals. Media support included assigning staff to cover conferences, the arrangement of press conferences or press interviews, and radio and television coverage for special events concerning health and development. The Service facilitated press interviews and coverage of the announcement by the United Nations Foundation and the Vodafone Group Foundation of their ground-breaking partnership in support of three United Nations causes: the Measles Initiative, the World Heritage Programme (UNESCO), and the fight against the HIV/AIDS



pandemic. On the theme of development, UNIS worked hard to raise the profile of the initiative of the President of Brazil to combat hunger and poverty, and bring attention to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) as an important forum to tackle the North-South digital divide. Both events were held in the presence of the Secretary-General.

With regards to the Middle East, the Information Service supported a special two-day conference on the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people. This high-level conference was co-hosted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The Information Service also organized a training programme for Palestinian media practitioners.

### **Educating future generations**

While we work to inform our global constituency through the international media, we must not forget the importance of education and informing the next generation.

During this year, UNOG tailored over 50 individual information programmes on the work of the United Nations to the needs of academic institutions and junior diplomats from all over the world. In 2004, some 65 outstanding postgraduate students from 33 countries were selected to take part in the annual three-week Graduate Study Programme. The seminar, entitled “The United Nations and Partnerships for Peace”, allowed the students to critically examine the Organization’s role in international affairs.

UNOG also places an important emphasis on the role of international law in the policy-making process. In connection with the annual session of the International Law Commission, the Legal Liaison Office plans, organizes and directs the prestigious International Law Seminar, an annual three-week programme for young government officials and academics specializing in international law. The fortieth session of the International Law Seminar took place at the Palais des Nations from 5 to 23 July 2004, during the fifty-sixth session of the International Law Commission.

Twenty-four participants of different nationalities, representing all regions of the world, observed plenary meetings of the Commission, attended specially arranged lectures, and participated in working groups on specific

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topics. Each Seminar participant was assigned to one of two working groups on “Unilateral Acts” and “Aquifers” which presented their findings at the conclusion of the Seminar.

As the Seminar is funded by voluntary contributions, the convening of the Seminar and the number of available fellowships depend on the volume of contributions raised by the Legal Liaison Office. This year, full fellowships (travel and subsistence allowance) were awarded to 17 candidates and partial fellowships (subsistence only) to two candidates.



# V Building respect and understanding

*T*he events of the new century have highlighted the importance of engagement between cultures and faiths. Tolerance is needed more than ever before. Learning about and appreciating each other's cultures is fundamental to the wider efforts of the United Nations. In resolution 1566 on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, the Security Council emphasized that enhancing dialogue and broadening the understanding among civilizations will contribute to international cooperation, which by itself is necessary to sustain the broadest possible fight against terrorism.

Here in Geneva, UNOG strives to play its part. As coordinator of cultural activities at UNOG, the Library works to promote a dialogue among civilizations as a key element in the strategy to rebuild trust and confidence among the peoples of the world.

## Enhancing cultural diversity

The Cultural Activities Programme of UNOG, which includes exhibitions, concerts, films, talks and donations of art, is based on the premise that the plurality of cultures not only enriches the lives of individuals, but is also the basis of peace and prosperity for wider communities and for countries. The UNOG Cultural Activities Programme is a practical platform to encourage interaction among peoples of different traditions and backgrounds.

The Cultural Activities Programme continues to grow, and in 2004 more than 15,000 people attended the wide variety of activities. Many events centred on particular priorities and activities of the United Nations, such as, for example, the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the elimination of apartheid in South Africa, the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the International Year of Rice and the United Nations work for indigenous populations.

An increasing number of events are organized in cooperation with Member States. Some have also been arranged in collaboration with international organizations and individual Member States. These jointly arranged events exemplify the value of interaction among cultures and of the inherent potential of international partnerships.

As part of the Programme, UNOG receives many donations of art, displayed throughout the Palais des Nations for the appreciation of all. Amongst these gifts was the prestigious exhibition “being. human rights in art”, donated to the Cultural Activities Programme. The modular exhibition system, inaugurated with the exhibition, was one of Switzerland’s accession gifts to the United Nations. The new exhibition system facilitates the organization of events that will allow United Nations Member States to present outstanding examples of their culture and heritage for others to learn about and develop greater understanding.

An overview of the achievements of the Cultural Activities Programme is provided in a separate publication, allowing readers to view in detail the array of exhibitions, concerts, talks and donations of art arranged by the Programme.

<b>Events</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b> (including estimates for Sept.-Dec.)
<b>Exhibitions</b>	52	62	55	57	51
<b>Concerts</b>	8	10	13	10	14
<b>Talks</b>		9	14	4	2
<b>Film festivals or events</b>	0	3	6	5	3
<b>Film projections</b>	0	10	16	17	7
<b>Theatre/dance events</b>	0	1	7	1	0
<b>Total number of Events</b>	60	85	95	89	77
<b>Donations of art</b>	11	20	12	23	7 (Jan.-June)
<b>Member States represented</b>	25	33	39	33	35



## VI Developing dialogue: concrete assistance

UNOG provides a fundamental infrastructure for the enhancement of the multilateral decision-making process. The Conference Services Division fulfils an invaluable role in supporting multilateral debate through the planning, coordination and servicing of all meetings.

During the last year, the Conference Services Division maintained regular consultations with United Nations bodies and organs for which it has the conference servicing responsibility with a view to assessing and assisting in formulating their conference servicing needs and entitlements, thus achieving maximum use of the Division's resources and facilities. As a result of these efforts, the utilization of resources increased to 90 per cent in 2004. Furthermore, the overall planning accuracy factor (that is, the ratio of services planned against services used) is now about 95 per cent at UNOG. Major intergovernmental meetings included, among many others, the 2004 annual session of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund Executive Board, the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the fifty-sixth session of the International Law Commission and the Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference of the International Labour Office.

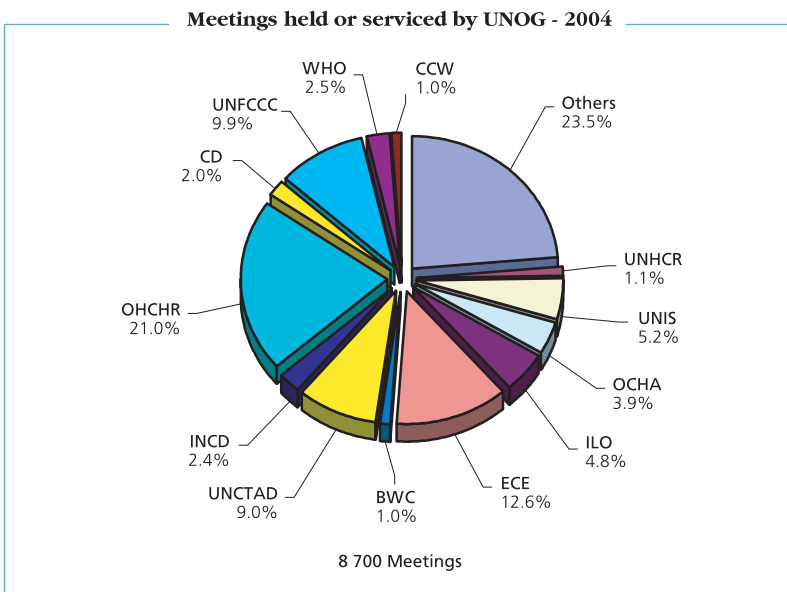
### Optimizing our resources

Optimizing our resources is a key priority for UNOG. We are able to assess our services in a cost-effective manner, thus supporting the progress towards reform of the United Nations. In line with these goals, UNOG successfully carried out client satisfaction surveys. The positive results of the six surveys provided invaluable information for the planning and implementation of the

future activities of the Conference Services Division. Following the surveys, constructive proposals were made regarding the forthcoming renovation of several conference rooms and facilities at UNOG.

## Employing our expertise

UNOG also serves as the primary adviser to governments who offer to host United Nations conferences, providing recommendations on all physical and human resources requirements for such events. During the year UNOG successfully coordinated and provided services to conferences outside Geneva, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties in Milan, Italy (December 2003), UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies in Bonn, Germany, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development conference, UNCTAD XI in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Such exchanges serve to reinforce the links between the United Nations and its Member States in their joint efforts to find cost-effective solutions and provide the optimum infrastructure for conferences.



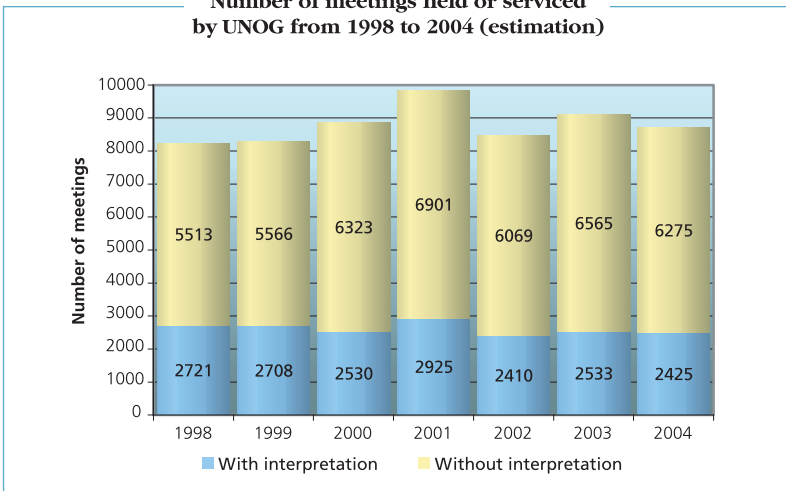


## Bridging language barriers

Effective communication between peoples of different lands and languages is key to problem solving, as consensus between parties may be encouraged through successful understanding and clear communication. The Interpretation Service of UNOG enables speakers to deliberate in any of the six official languages of the Organization. While servicing the core programme of meetings held at the Palais des Nations, the expertise of staff is further utilized in high-level consultations, for example, on the situation in Georgia, the discussions of the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, the Tripartite Summit held between the Presidents of Cameroon and Nigeria and the Secretary-General, and the high-level visits of the Presidents of France, Brazil and Chile to discuss a fresh initiative to combat global hunger.

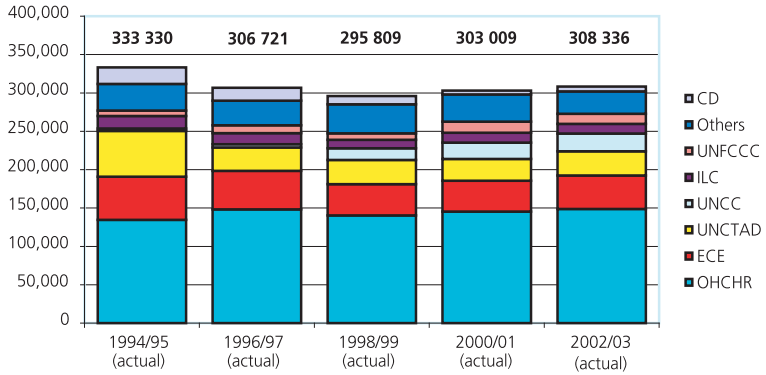
Interpretation services were also extended to special rapporteurs and holders of special procedures mandates of OHCHR, as well as to special representatives of the Secretary-General on investigative missions in some 25 countries of the world. Their contribution feeds directly into the fact-finding and reporting tasks of their respective offices and, thus, the decision-making processes in meeting challenges in the field of human rights and political affairs.

**Number of meetings held or serviced  
by UNOG from 1998 to 2004 (estimation)**

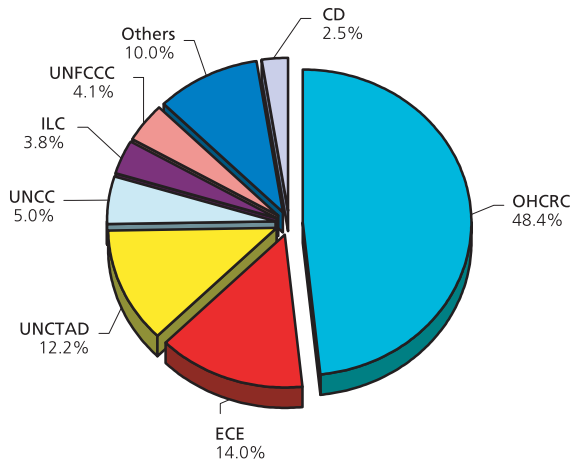




**TRANSLATION**  
Principal Users in 1994 to 2004 by biennium



**TRANSLATION**  
Principal Users in 2004



145 480 pages estimated



While UNOG works towards increasing efficiency in delivery, it is important that the standard and quality of documents prepared is maintained, and improved where possible. Exchanges at the inter-agency level with their counterpart sections in New York and other United Nations offices, have contributed to the increased coherence and synchronization of United Nations global systems. In the same vein, the Reproduction Section is now in the process of implementing the issuance of documents in the same format as that of Headquarters in New York. Once both offices clear the present evaluation samples, and technical queries are resolved, major conferences such as future sessions of UNCTAD and of human rights treaty bodies will be provided with documentation in line with that distributed outside Geneva. This is a further example of greater collaboration between key offices of the United Nations system.

In the area of technological innovations, a programme developed in New York to manage room assignments for interpreters was installed in Geneva. UNOG is also working to ensure interoperability with other duty stations on such projects as computer-assisted translation.

In line with the Secretary-General's recommendations to digitalize work processes and make documents and other key resources available in electronic format, the Publishing Service is in the process of introducing an electronic system for conference documents distribution. Once fully implemented, documents will be distributed electronically to Member State delegations through the Internet. UNOG is also implementing an experimental pilot project whereby the response of delegates to the presentation of meeting documentation in CD-ROM format is assessed. This user-friendly interface, available in both English and French, facilitates searching and navigation of conference documentation, and is intended to provide convenient storage and retrieval of United Nations documents, pending a decision by Member States during the 2004 General Assembly. These efforts will be complemented by a "Print on Demand" document management system as outlined in the Secretary-General's report on reform. These efforts will drastically reduce reliance on costly hard copy reproduction. The major development in the Reference Unit has been the extensive use of electronic referencing representing a further step forward towards making documents available in electronic format.

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The new Geneva Web Calendar, produced as part of the redeveloped Web site of UNOG, would allow United Nations bodies based in Geneva to post information about all their meetings and conferences, together with the relevant documents. If supported and utilized by the United Nations family in Geneva, delegates would be able to access all details and related documentation, background papers, agendas etc. about the relevant event from a single information source. The possibility of attaching documentation is just one advantage of the new electronic Calendar, which has been developed specifically to serve the international community in Geneva and assist the work of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes as they strive to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.



## VII Recording for the future

Access to knowledge, both past and present, provides a foundation for “lessons learned”, guiding policy makers in the multilateral process whilst encouraging greater tolerance and respect between people of different origins and opinions. Built “to serve as a center of international research and an instrument of international understanding”, the Library at UNOG is central to the institutional memory of the Organization and continues to serve as a gateway to knowledge, thought and culture, thereby facilitating the work of the United Nations in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

### Accessing diverse knowledge

Throughout 2004, the Library at UNOG developed its acquisitions policy to build collections that will reflect diverse opinions, cultures and languages. In the spirit of United Nations reform and cost-efficiency, 53 per cent of monographs, and 83 per cent of serials have been acquired through the gift and exchange programme. For the year, a total of 1,092 agreements with government institutions and other international and regional organizations were implemented for the exchange of materials. (From a total of 4,337 serials titles, 719 were purchased and 3,618 were acquired through the gift and exchange programme.)

This year, the Library initiated a new strategy to reach out to its diverse users. Among the various client-oriented services and products that were made available to users in 2004 was the online reservation of books, and the searchable lists of new acquisitions. The “Ask a Librarian” service allows users to send a request online and obtain research assistance via e-mail on a general or specialized topic of interest. Finally, the Library Information Sessions are designed to better acquaint users with the Library’s wealth of information and to enable them to access and retrieve United Nations or non-United Nations information resources more effectively and efficiently.

The four Library Information Sessions modules are practice-oriented, and are offered in English and French.

<b>Library Information Sessions (December 2003 - July 2004)</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
<b>Introduction to Library Services</b>	242
<b>Searching United Nations documentation</b>	109
<b>General Reference Services and Cyberspace</b>	68
<b>Specialized Reference Services</b>	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>491</b>

The Library also initiated dedicated services to support the work of conferences organized at the Palais des Nations. In collaboration with conference services staff, the Library develops special bibliographies, tailor-made information sessions, and on-site reference services.

### Appraising our services

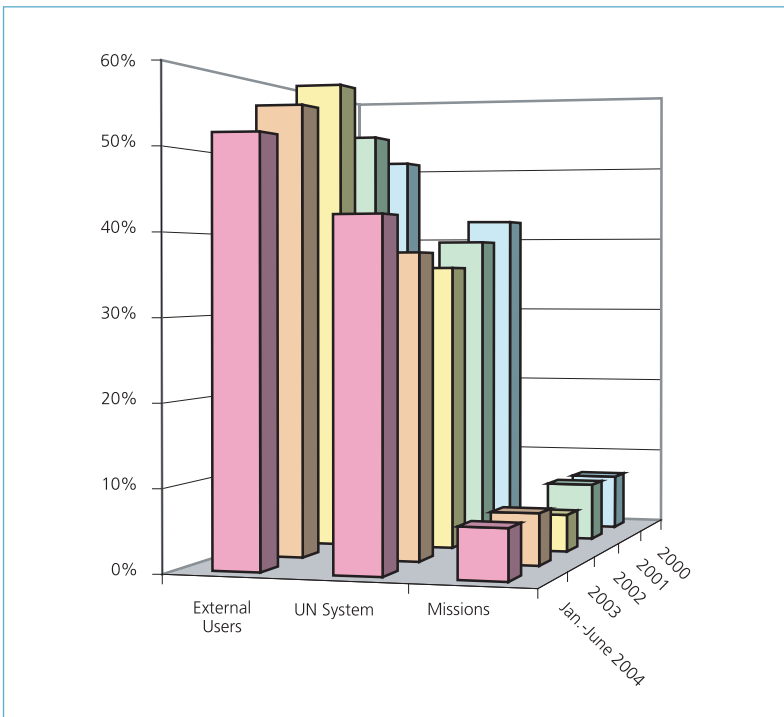
The UNOG Library is positioned as a central point of knowledge that may be tapped, not only by the United Nations system, but also by civil society, the diplomatic community and the general public. User statistics indicate a general increase in Library usage following the slump of 2002, with the number of United Nations and United Nations system users (permanent missions and secretariat staff) increasing vis à vis external users.

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>Jan.-June 2004</b>
<b>Number of Library users</b>	78 664	76 876	61 582	68 102	38 584
<b>Number of Questions</b>	54 275	51 126	45 864	40 329	21 820
<b>Loans and Usage</b>	155 948	148 197	84 008	99 912	35 069



## Distribution of library users

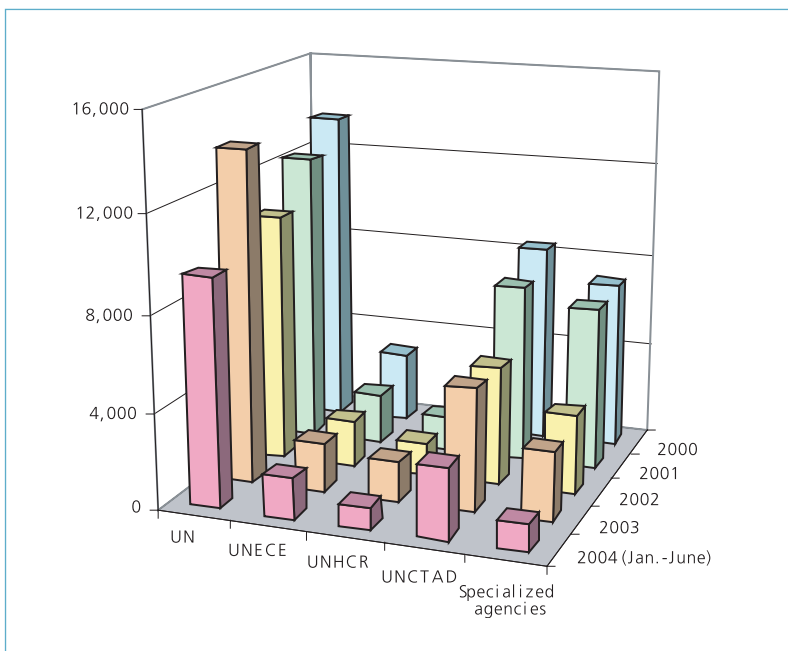
	Total UN System	%	Missions	%	Academia and others	%	Total
<b>2000</b>	33 306	42	5 458	7	39 900	51	78 664
<b>2001</b>	30 207	39	5 489	7	41 180	54	76 876
<b>2002</b>	22 063	36	2 849	5	36 670	60	61 582
<b>2003</b>	25 673	38	4 316	6	38 113	56	68 102
<b>Jan.-June 2004</b>	16 225	42	2 377	6	19 982	52	38 584



## Library users within the United Nations system in Geneva

	United Nations	UNECE	UNHCR	UNCTAD	Specialized agencies	Total United Nations system
<b>2000</b>	13 493	3 006	1 333	8 390	7 084	33 306
<b>2001</b>	12 259	2 107	1 468	7 493	6 880	30 207
<b>2002</b>	10 456	1 944	1 380	4 958	3 325	22 063
<b>2003</b>	13 927	2 029	1 697	5 106	2 914	25 673
<b>Jan.-June 2004</b>	9 493	1 692	903	2 980	1 157	16 225

## Distribution among Geneva-based specialized agencies





As ILO and WHO hold their annual conferences at the Palais des Nations, they are the most important users from specialized agencies.

	ILO	ITC	ITU	WHO	WIPO	WTO
<b>2000</b>	438	164	107	269	128	140
<b>2001</b>	411	251	82	455	142	174
<b>2002</b>	349	101	63	227	109	241
<b>2003</b>	493	172	173	317	127	185
<b>2004</b> <b>(Jan.-June)</b>	212	86	54	159	64	112
<b>Total</b>	1 908	774	479	1 427	570	852

## Integrating information management

In line with the Secretary-General's recommendations to strengthen cooperation between United Nations Libraries, UNOG played an active role in the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries.

The UNOG Library further developed inter-library cooperation by expanding its network of satellite libraries. UNOG offers to these libraries its integrated library management system as the backbone infrastructure for their catalogues. The libraries of ITU, OHCHR, and the United Nations Office at Vienna have joined the other four satellite libraries already participating in the network.

The Library also organized the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Knowledge Sharing and Information Management, the inter-agency library "community of practice". This meeting brought together 55 librarians representing 35 organizations.

## Institutional memory

Today's records are tomorrow's memory. The Library continued in its efforts to collect from the departments of the secretariat documents that are either vital



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records, or have historical value, and promoted improved records management procedures. A total of 1.3 linear kilometres of material was transferred to the Archives in 2004: 50 per cent of the material was deposited by a peace-keeping mission; of the remaining 600 linear metres, 25 per cent came from OHCHR, and 10 per cent from OCHA.

In 2004, in response to the demand of an increasing number of researchers worldwide, the automation of the Archives catalogue was initiated to ensure access through the Internet. This valuable heritage has attracted the attention of various high-level delegations during their official visits to UNOG. It has also been showcased in several exhibitions at the Palais des Nations throughout 2004.

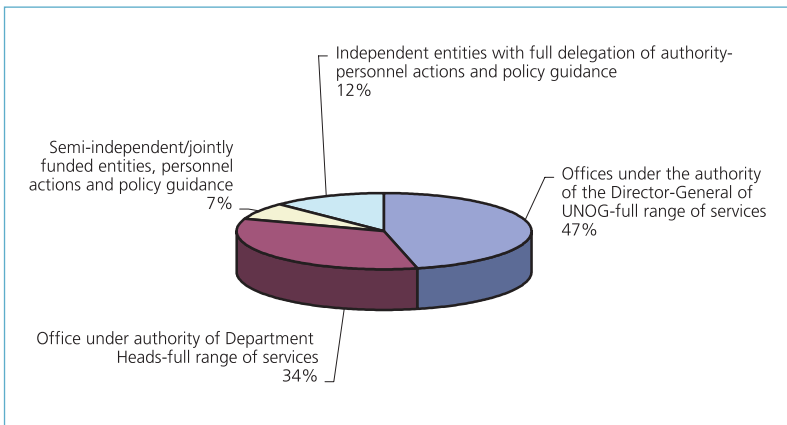


## VIII Managing the workforce

Identifying staff members' needs and matching them to appropriate solutions are important factors in establishing and maintaining productive partnerships with our staff and assisting them to help realize the Secretary-General's key priorities and objectives, including the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals.

During 2004, UNOG provided human resources management services to more than 3,500 staff members in more than 30 client departments and offices based in Geneva, as well as in 81 field offices in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Eastern Europe and America. UNOG staff members are directly involved in support of the Organization's efforts in a broad spectrum of activities, such as human rights, humanitarian affairs, environmental issues, economic and trade matters, political affairs and disarmament.

### Human resources: distribution of clients serviced by UNOG

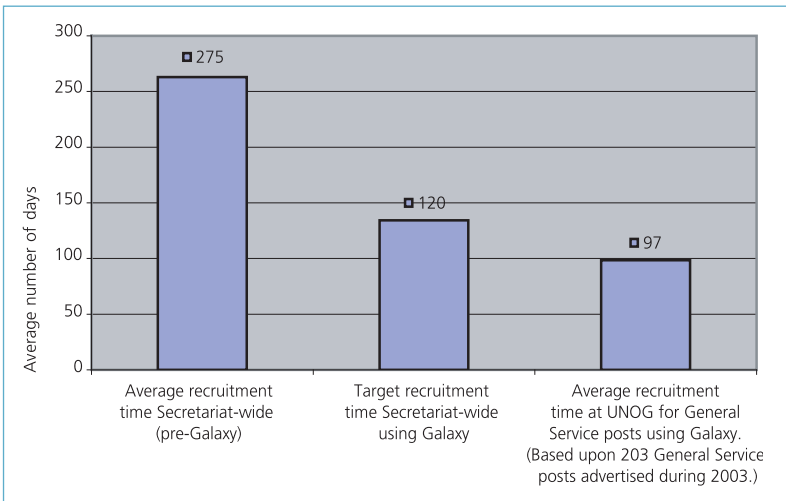


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## Recruiting, training and developing

In order to meet the challenges ahead, performance management and staff development must take place alongside the core work of the Organization. During 2004, the implementation of the human resources reform programme of the Secretary-General continued with particular emphasis being given to strengthening the commitment to the Organization's principal values and managerial competencies, as well as enhancing client orientation. These core values and competencies have now been fully integrated into the recruitment and selection process and are used as a benchmark for the annual performance appraisal of staff. The new rules governing staff selection, as well as the online application procedure have considerably reduced the recruitment timeline for posts of the professional and higher categories and the most senior general service posts.

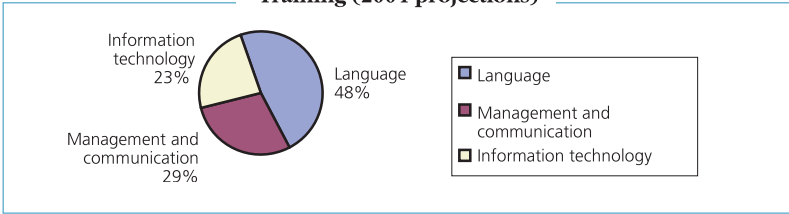
### Average recruitment time for filling vacant General Service posts



Language training courses offered in the six official languages of the United Nations attract over 2,000 participants annually. In addition to promoting multilingualism, these courses contribute to fostering a greater respect for diversity among the staff, and encourage their mobility.



**Training (2004 projections)**

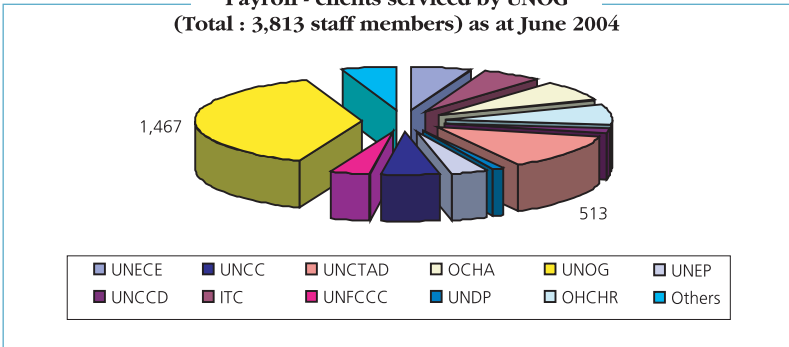


Type of training	Number of participants
Language	2500
Management and Communication	1500
Information Technology	1200

**Integrating fiscal systems**

The payment of staff and management of medical insurance are just two examples of financial administration that contributes to the welfare of United Nations personnel and directly impacts their working life. UNOG provides core financial support services covering allotment delivery, post management, accounts management, various payments processing, staff payroll, treasury functions and medical insurance services to more than 20 Geneva-based organizations/departments as well as entities located in Bonn and Turin. Servicing the system increases efficiency and allows for standardization.

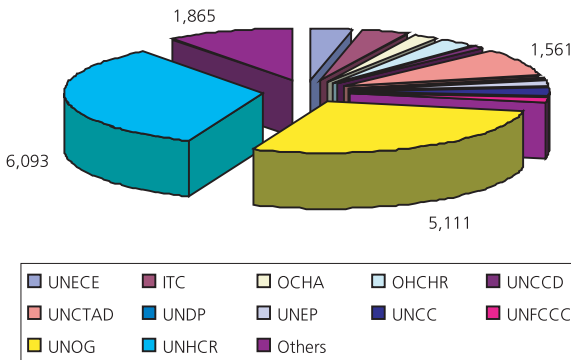
**Payroll - clients serviced by UNOG  
(Total : 3,813 staff members) as at June 2004**



Having fully integrated all organizations/departments serviced by UNOG within the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) in 2003, UNOG has been able to provide more efficient and timely administrative and financial services to all, thereby helping programme managers to administer their resources more effectively. IMIS functionality and companion systems are being routinely appraised and enhanced to ensure maximum operational efficiency and data integrity. In addition, a detailed review of internal operational procedures has been undertaken to strengthen internal financial control.

**Staff Mutual Insurance Society against Sickness and Accident**

Clients serviced by UNOG  
 Total: 18,159 members including 3,849 retirees  
 as at August 2004



UNOG provides essential budgetary services and advice for 30 regular budget and extra-budgetary activities to offices located in Geneva, as well as to entities outside the duty station. In 2004, UNOG managed US\$ 214 million worth of regular budget funds and approximately US\$ 124 million worth of extra-budgetary funds. In line with the United Nations system, the introduction of the results-based budgeting approach at UNOG has enhanced the evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of activities, strengthening the link between expected results and allocated resources and, consequently, ensuring greater managerial accountability.



## Strengthening communication technology

The protection of data and the strengthening of the information and communication technology platform are priorities in a global context where information channels may be clogged by unwanted mail and systems are subject to hackers and malicious programmes. UNOG seeks to build a more robust and responsive infrastructure. The telephone exchange (PABX) at UNOG has been upgraded so as to allow for the future installation of Internet-based voice communication services, positively affecting cost efficiency. The videoconferencing facilities on United Nations premises have been extended with the installation of a dedicated videoconference room in the Palais des Nations. The forthcoming installation of a new central storage system will allow for greater security, consolidation and higher availability of enterprise-wide data. The planned online replication of UNOG infrastructure at a remote site will provide for business continuity and disaster recovery features, thereby enhancing the overall data security on the at the Palais des Nations. UNOG is also setting up new mechanisms to ensure that due consideration for efficiency and rationalization is paid in the selection of new information technology solutions, in line with the reform of the Secretary-General concerning the information and communication technology strategy.

## Efficiency through common services

UNOG continues to assume the leadership of the three-tier common services structure prescribed by the Secretary-General. The Management Ownership Committee chaired by the Director-General of UNOG, assisted by the Task Force on Common Services and the various working groups, is actively promoting common services initiatives at the local level. UNOG is also spearheading an initiative designed to further enhance the efficiency of the common services apparatus through, inter alia, recognizing the essential role of the Joint Purchase Service, which pools the requirements of participating organizations in respect of numerous commodities and services. The common services structure has also been used as a unique platform to deal effectively with security issues, and in particular the harmonization of access control and identification, with a view to presenting a common front against unlawful intrusions and threats at the level of the duty station.

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## Protecting our people: making United Nations premises safer

In the aftermath of the terrorist bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August 2003, the Secretariat developed specific worldwide headquarters minimum security standards designed to enhance the protection of staff, buildings and all activities held on United Nations premises.

The establishment of these new standards prompted UNOG to review the security enhancement projects that were under way. The Office of the Director-General adapted some of the existing projects to the higher level of protection prescribed, and developed new projects in areas which had not been included in previous endeavours, in order to complete the overall security framework. The General Assembly approved an additional budget in June 2004 to cover some of the new requirements for the entire United Nations Secretariat. Additional requirements will be reviewed in the context of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The core elements of the security project at UNOG include strengthening the perimeters of the Palais des Nations and relocating specific activities that carry an inherent security risk, such as mail and pouch systems. The physical enhancements are coupled with more stringent access rules so as to ensure tight control over the vehicles entering the precinct and the identity of visitors. These measures should be in place by the end of 2005, and the overall project is expected to be finalized by 2007.



# A platform for peace and progress

2005 will be an important year for taking stock for the United Nations. The Organization will mark its sixtieth anniversary, which provides an occasion for assessing accomplishments and considering how best to confront current and future challenges. Marking the first five years of the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the General Assembly will also review progress towards meeting the commitments of this blueprint for peace and development and the eight Millennium Development Goals that spring from it.

Strengthening the rule of law, both at national and international levels, is critical to realizing the vision of the Millennium Declaration and meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Ensuring the implementation of disarmament treaties is an important means to defending our world against the proliferation – and potential use – of weapons of mass destruction. In applying the law, the international community should deny financial resources and safe havens to perpetrators of terrorist acts, and in this way address the possibility of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Since all acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, the rule of law is a necessary foundation for resolving conflicts and for addressing the root causes that fuel and prolong them. Strengthening the rule of law and appropriate legal mechanisms is central to rebuilding not only institutions, but also confidence in post-conflict societies. An effective framework of law and mechanisms to apply it is crucial to the international community's efforts to promote human rights, protect civilians from genocide and to put an end to impunity by bringing those who commit crimes against humanity and war crimes to justice.

This is why the Secretary-General has pledged to make the Organization's work to strengthen the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies a priority for the remainder of his tenure. The Security Council has welcomed this focus and reaffirmed the vital importance that the Council attaches to promoting justice and the rule of law. UNOG looks



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forward to continuing to support the efforts of the international community to enhance the rule of law.

Further developing and expanding the rule of law must be a collective effort that reflects the priorities and protects the interests of all, based on a common commitment. Everybody has a responsibility to contribute and must therefore have a stake in filling in the gaps in the framework. However, without appropriate enforcement, rules may not be applied and respected. If norms and standards are to be effective, they need to be complemented by implementation mechanisms that ensure that they are put into practice to serve their purpose at both national and international levels.

A large number of international norms, standards and rules, together with necessary implementation measures, are negotiated at UNOG, drawing on the expertise and experience available within the wider United Nations family in Geneva, making it a dynamic centre of multilateral diplomacy. In this way, UNOG makes a valuable contribution to the international community's efforts in this regard and to meeting the commitments of the Millennium Declaration.

In 2005, the United Nations Office at Geneva will be a key centre for the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary. It will be a focal point from where the international community in Geneva and beyond may reflect on the importance of the Organization, and how to continue to strengthen it so that it may fulfil its mandated role as effectively as possible. UNOG looks forward to marking the anniversary with Member States, the host country and the public in a series of events throughout the year.

As the Organization enters its sixtieth year, the need for an effective United Nations, focused on the pressing challenges ahead, is as great as ever. The Organization continues to play a central role in resolving conflicts, reconciling opposing parties, restoring societies torn apart by violence and realizing long-term development by responding to the needs of the most vulnerable. As a platform for peace and progress, UNOG continues to support and facilitate these collective efforts.