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ANNUAL REPORT 2017





UN GENEVA
ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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UN Photo: Violaine Martin

The United Nations rose from the ashes of the Second World War to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Seven decades after these words were enshrined in its Charter, they remain as relevant, and urgent, as ever. Today, “we the peoples” are witnesses to rising insecurity, growing inequality and a changing climate – factors that have levied a devastating toll on humanity. Conflict has killed hundreds of thousands, led to human rights violations and prompted millions to flee their homes. Globalization has brought prosperity to some, yet too many have been left behind. Their exclusion and marginalization fuel the fragmentation of societies, the polarization of politics and the demonization of others. The challenges we face today demand concerted global action, yet they come at a time when multilateralism is being questioned in many parts of the world.

To meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, our 72-year-old organization must embrace change. It must re-evaluate its priorities, re-examine the way it functions and rediscover its core mission. Change is the driving force behind the ambitious reforms of the United Nations spearheaded by Secretary-General António Guterres. These reforms will ensure better prevention of conflicts, support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and make our Organization more responsive to the needs of those it serves.

UN Geneva, or the United Nations Office at Geneva, has embraced the spirit of reform, recognizing that only by adapting to an ever-changing world, and doing so in a truly collaborative manner, can it continue to efficiently serve the international community. Reform at UN Geneva focuses on three themes: impact, openness and the future. For over 150 years, the world has met on the shores of Lake Geneva to tackle its most challenging problems. At the heart of this gathering of nations is UN Geneva, which provides indispensable support for collective action that positively impacts the life of every person on this planet. At a time of pervasive mistrust in public institutions, UN Geneva is embracing openness and finding new ways to disseminate the vital message

of the United Nations. To protect and build upon the hard-won gains of the past, UN Geneva is looking to the future, investing in its infrastructure, staff and assets.

These reforms will not only revitalize UN Geneva, but all of International Geneva, that inimitable ecosystem of actors found here, a concentration that has nurtured a unique mindset focused on sharing knowledge and rewarding cooperation. The world needs this “Spirit of Geneva” now, more than ever. Nearly 17 years into the twenty-first century, the limits of hard power – the ability to coerce others through military or economic means – are apparent. The major global challenges facing our interconnected and interdependent planet transcend the ability of any one actor to resolve them, including through hard power. Today, progress depends on multilateral collaboration. In this world, it is commercial clout, economic vibrancy, technological prowess and cultural attraction that shape our collective destiny.

Soft power – the ability to be inclusive – is more helpful in this situation than hard power. Success today is about coming together to forge an enduring consensus around shared norms, values, interests or policies. By taking into account the various and sometimes contradictory perspectives of different actors, this process can yield a new understanding of a problem and solutions that are more holistic and lasting than those imposed by one party. Tackling challenges like global warming, preventing pandemics and protecting cyberspace – just to name a few – are impossible through hard power alone. If hard power consists of unilateral actions and bilateral alliances, soft power’s preferred field of play is multilateralism and rule-building. It depends on a space where actors come together to negotiate and exchange ideas, not impose or threaten.

International Geneva has long served as the symbol of a rules-based international order, a place where States and non-State actors bring their soft power to bear to shape common rules and norms. This extends to nearly every issue of global importance, such as peace, development, human rights, health, cyberspace and telecommunications. States that participate in the multilateral work that takes place in Geneva can

influence others to abide by their norms and to share in their interests. In the process, they also strengthen their own soft power by proving to be engaged global actors.

International Geneva, by providing the space where actors can wield their soft power, facilitates understanding both of the interests of others and of the issues at hand. As the home of leading international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and private sector actors, Geneva brings together not only politicians and diplomats, but also experts and other actors. This makes Geneva a space focused more on solutions and less on politics: fertile ground for actors to bring their soft power to bear for the benefit of all of humanity.

As UN Geneva continues to serve the international community in the years to come, we look forward to further developing the collaborations with our numerous partners in International Geneva and beyond. Together we can and will make it possible to renew multilateralism and help forge a United Nations that is equipped for the twenty-first century. Only by boldly embracing change can we live up to the trust placed in us by “we the peoples”.



Michael Møller

Under-Secretary-General
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament

2017 IN NUMBERS

UN Geneva is at the heart of International Geneva, bringing together a unique mix of actors and providing the critical support necessary for constructive dialogue, innovative thinking and concerted action.

Providing key infrastructure and support, UN Geneva contributes significantly to issues across the UN agenda, such as international peace and security, disarmament, human rights, the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals, humanitarian relief, and much more.

These statistics offer a glimpse of the diverse range of activities taking place at UN Geneva in 2017.

UN SYSTEM IN GENEVA

9,726 

STAFF

International Geneva is a global hub for capacity building, knowledge dissemination, advocacy and policy development for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2017, the UN system in Geneva had **9,726** staff members in the fields of health, labour, human rights, intellectual property, disarmament and more.

1,520 

UN GENEVA STAFF

The United Nations has one of the most diverse workforces. **1,520** UN Geneva staff, from a wide range of professional backgrounds and of **105** nationalities, provided essential support to the international community. In 2017, the average age of a UN staff member in Geneva was **47**.

105 

NATIONALITIES

47 

AVERAGE AGE

25 

UN ENTITIES IN GENEVA

160 

FIELD OFFICES

88 

COUNTRIES

A wide range of common administrative and support services was provided to more than **25** UN entities in Geneva and Bonn and to **160** field offices in **88** countries. For example, UN Geneva Human Resources administered **4,568** staff in **88** countries.

UN GENEVA HR ADMINISTERED

4,568 

STAFF

88 

COUNTRIES



28,000



PAYMENTS PER MONTH

On average, UN Geneva Financial Resources processed **28,000** payments per month. The medical insurance claims portal was accessed **41,000** times by staff from **123** different countries since its roll-out in June 2017.

MEDICAL INSURANCE CLAIMS PORTAL

41,000



VISITS

123



COUNTRIES

172



SPEECHES

Director-General Michael Møller delivered **172** speeches, gave **26** interviews and went on **19** missions to raise awareness about issues of global concern to the world community.

26



INTERVIEWS

19



MISSIONS

942



TWEETS

503



LETTERS

In 2017, the Director-General tweeted **942** times and signed **503** letters.

17



LUNCHEONS

40



HEADS OF AGENCIES

85



BILATERAL MEETINGS

35



EXECUTIVE BRIEFINGS

33



NEW PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

The Director-General organized **17** luncheons, gathering almost **40** heads of agencies, to promote collaboration, exchange ideas and build the partnerships needed to reach the SDGs. **85** bilateral meetings were held between the Director-General and high-level officials visiting the Palais des Nations.

The Office of the Director-General organized **35** Executive Briefings for the Geneva diplomatic community.

33 new Permanent Representatives presented their credentials to the Director-General to ensure the continuity of their respective Governments' representation at UN Geneva and to promote the ideals of the Organization at all levels.

205



INTERNATIONAL GENDER CHAMPIONS

58%



GENEVA-BASED

60%



MEN

Originating in Geneva, the International Gender Champions network expanded in 2017 to **205** Champions, of which **58%** are based in Geneva and **60%** are men. Sister chapters can now be found in New York and Vienna, and additional chapters will soon open in Nairobi and Bonn-Berlin.

100%



MEETINGS COMPRISED BOTH GENDERS

100% of all the panel discussions and meetings attended this year by Director-General Michael Møller, an International Gender Champion since July 2015, were composed of both genders.

WOMEN

54%



OF CANDIDATES SELECTED

44%



OF P5 TO D2

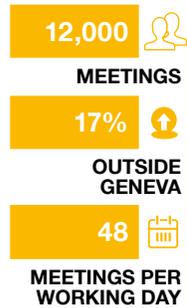
49%



OF P1 TO P4

54% of candidates selected for positions at UN Geneva were women. Female staff at senior levels (P5 to D2) increased to **44%** in 2017 from 41% in 2016. The percentage of female staff at the P1 to P4 levels was **49%** in 2017, nearing parity.

2017 IN NUMBERS



UN Geneva provided services to **12,000** meetings, **17%** of which took place outside Geneva. On average, **48** meetings were held per working day.



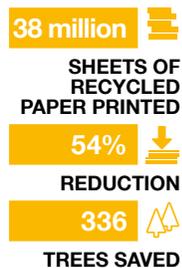
The conference management tool Indico was used to organize **364** conferences comprising **5,157** sessions. It handled **59,171** registrations, **50,568** attendee approvals and the printing of **38,377** badges.



Making the work of UN Geneva more accessible to all, **21,548** working days of interpretation were provided at **3,239** meetings. In addition, **247** working days of sign language interpretation were provided, **123** of them in International Sign.



The **72 million** words translated in official documents and publications helped make the work of the UN more accessible to all.



Only **38 million** sheets of recycled A4 paper were printed in 2017, a **54%** reduction from 83 million sheets in 2010, saving the equivalent of **336** trees.



9 interactive publications were produced, totalling **1,210** pages.



4,875 representatives of **981** NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were accredited to UN Geneva to take part in UN activities at the Palais des Nations. This represented an increase of **14%** compared to 2016.



Nearly **70** NGO events were held in the Palais des Nations with the help of UN Geneva. At least half of those focused on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.



8,454 people attended **649** training courses, providing staff members, clients and delegates with essential skills to work more efficiently towards our common goals.



1,452 people took gender sensitivity training courses organized by the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism, in line with the UN Geneva Gender Policy requirements.



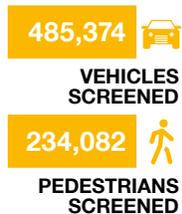
3,218 people attended language training courses in the six official UN languages to promote linguistic balance and multilingualism within the Organization.



As one of the prime venues for decision-making in the world, UN Geneva welcomed **130** Heads of Government and other high-level officials who required the close protection provided by the Security and Safety Service.



39 Security and Safety Service personnel provided **362** days of support to **23** field missions, to facilitate critical work in human rights and peace and security.



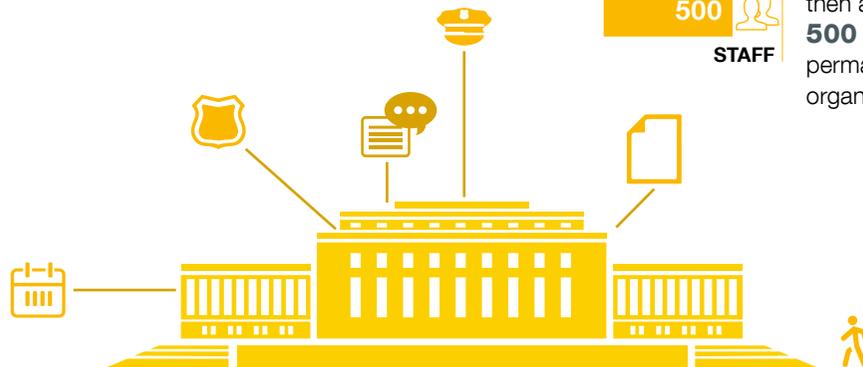
485,374 vehicles and **234,082** pedestrians were screened on entry to the Palais des Nations, helping to ensure a safe and secure environment for UN activities in Geneva.



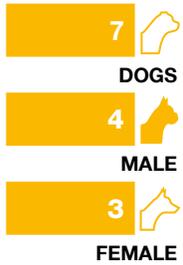
222 security officers were trained in areas such as first aid, close protection, fire prevention, tactical baton training and active shooter response. The Security and Safety Service provided approximately **1,200** hours of security training, including to staff of other Geneva-based UN agencies, funds and programmes and staff of the UN Geneva Medical Service, ensuring emergency preparedness for staff in Geneva and those travelling to high-risk locations.



At the Palais des Nations Open Day held on 7 October, the Security and Safety Service screened **14,000** visitors, who were then able to interact with **500** staff of UN Geneva, permanent missions and partner organizations.



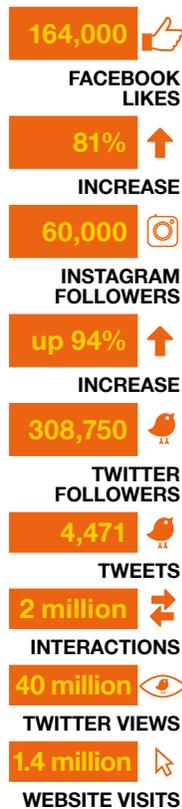
2017 IN NUMBERS



Security and Safety Service's DetEx K9 Unit, which is responsible for detecting explosives, is made up of **7** dogs of various breeds currently on active duty: **4** males and **3** females, achieving a near-gender balance in the canine team.



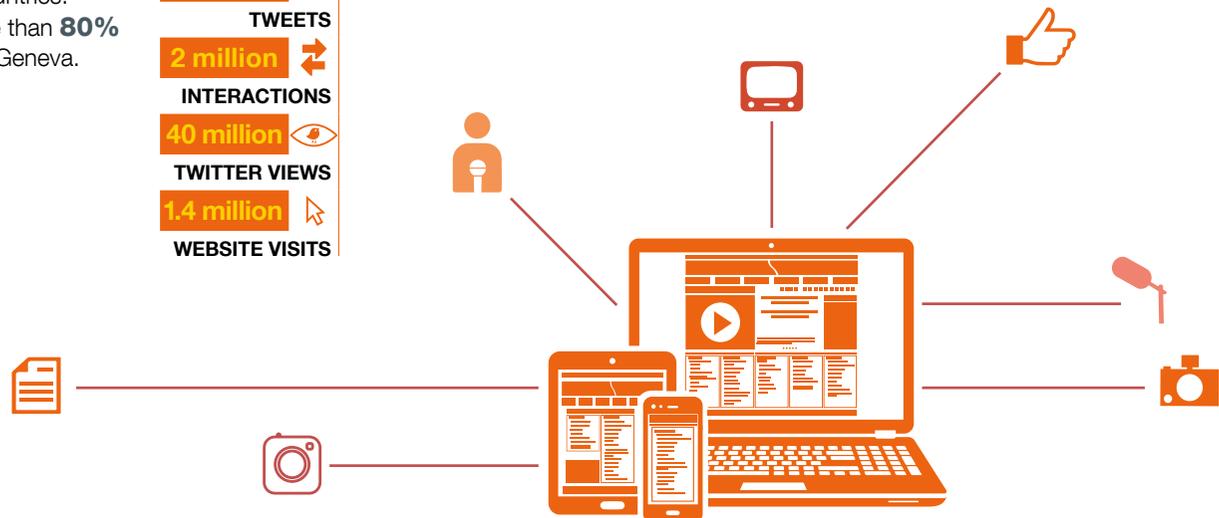
2017 was a record-breaking year for the Visitors' Service, which offered **4,851** guided tours to the **121,895** visitors from **45** different countries. Youth made up more than **80%** of the visitors to UN Geneva.



UN Geneva's audience on Facebook and Instagram nearly doubled in 2017, compared to 2016. The UN Geneva Facebook page was liked by **164,000** people (up **81%** from last year). The Instagram account had close to **60,000** followers (up **94%** from 2016). The UN Geneva Twitter account remained the most popular, with **308,750** followers, and over **2 million** interactions with the **4,471** tweets, which were seen over **40 million** times. There were over **1.4 million** visits to the UN Geneva website.



The Information Service produced **971** press releases, disseminating the work of UN Geneva around the world, and accredited over **1,100** members of the press to cover UN activities in Geneva for a diverse global audience. The Service also held **99** biweekly press briefings for accredited journalists, and hosted **260** press conferences by UN officials, UN system organizations based in Geneva and Member States.



2,453



WEBCAST
VIDEOS
ARCHIVED

400,000



VIEWS

1,000



REPORTS,
INTERVIEWS
AND AUDIO
CLIPS

2,500



TELEVISION
STORIES

33



INTERVIEWS
AT THE SDG
STUDIO

To make the work of the United Nations accessible to all, **2,453** webcast videos from UN Geneva were archived on UN Web TV, which were seen more than **400,000** times by viewers from every country in the world. UN Radio featured almost **1,000** reports, interviews and audio clips from UN Geneva, for dozens of partner radio stations broadcasting in English, French or other official languages, while **2,500** television stories on major events in Geneva were distributed via the European Broadcasting Union, UNifeed and the UN Geneva social media platforms.

33 interviews took place in the SDG Studio in 2017, with exciting guests such as sports star Neymar Jr. and the President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet.

250+



STUDENT
PARTICIPANTS

71%



IMPROVED THEIR
UNDERSTANDING
OF UN

Out of the **250+** students who attended the 2017 Young Reporters programme at UN Geneva, **71%** of participants agree that the conferences improved their understanding of the work of the UN and its partners.

5,000



FAIRY TALES
FOR A FAIRER
WORLD

Almost **5,000** copies of *Fairy Tales for a Fairer World* in English, French and Russian have exposed children and adults to the Sustainable Development Goals.

7,000



170 DAILY
ACTIONS

7,000 copies of 170 Daily Actions to Transform Our World were distributed at the UN Open Day in English and French.

17



IMPACT
INFOGRAPHICS
ON SDGs

17 impact infographics (one per SDG) were created with on average **13** participating organizations for each. One of the most successful was the infographic on SDG 3 – on health – with 18 participating organizations, which is published in this annual report.

13



PARTICIPATING
ORGANIZATIONS
PER SDG

350



LEADERS
& EXPERTS

20



TOPICS

350 leaders and experts were brought together on the SDG Stories platform across **20** topics, talking about their work to advance the goals.

15 million



PAGES TO BE
DIGITIZED

3,000



METRE-TALL
TOWER

In 2017, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva began an ambitious plan to digitize the more than **15 million** pages contained in the League of Nations Archives. If these pages were stacked vertically, they would create a **3,000**-metre-tall tower.

108



CULTURAL
ACTIVITIES

The Library also held **108** cultural activities in 2017, events that contributed to the rich cultural tapestry of International Geneva.

IMPACT

It may not always make the headlines, but the United Nations impacts the life of every person on Earth, every day. Its organizations feed 80 million people in 80 countries, supply vaccines to 45% of the world's children and help 63.5 million people fleeing war, famine and persecution. UN specialized agencies set international standards in health, labour, telecommunications and so many other fields – standards that make our modern lives possible. The UN Human Rights Council is the only global forum where the voices of victims and activists join those of Member States and civil society in defence of our fundamental rights. Although it works largely behind the scenes, UN Geneva delivers the services that make it possible for the UN and its partners to impact our lives for the better. UN Geneva administrators, conference and language specialists, security guards, communication experts, librarians and countless others make it possible for the initiatives of the UN and its partners to resonate far beyond Geneva's shores.

WE THE PEOPLES

“We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”... The commitment expressed in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations continues to be the guiding star for the work of the Organization both in Geneva and around the world.

In recent years, the number of conflicts and conflict-related casualties has increased significantly, with civilians paying the highest price. In response, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, committed to do “everything we can to help countries to avert the outbreak of crises that take a high toll on humanity, undermining institutions and capacities to achieve peace and development”. He identified the inability to prevent crises as the most serious shortcoming of the international community and expressed his determination to prioritize prevention across the United Nations system.

International Geneva is playing an important role in the implementation of this vision, in particular in the area of preventive diplomacy and mediation. The unique tradition and spirit of Geneva make the city the venue of choice for mediators who work to prevent or end violent conflicts.

In January 2017, the Secretary-General convened the first session of the Conference on Cyprus in the historic Council Chamber at the Palais des Nations, opening the international phase of the negotiations. Although the Conference closed following a session in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in late June and early July 2017, it brought the parties one step closer to a comprehensive settlement and to a shared vision of a united Cyprus.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, continues to work to support ceasefire and humanitarian efforts and to promote a negotiated solution to the conflict. In 2017, his Office hosted the ceasefire and humanitarian task forces on a weekly basis, while the Special Envoy facilitated five rounds of Intra-Syrian Talks between government and opposition representatives. He also closely involved Syrian civil society in the process through a Civil

Society Support Room and promoted the participation of women through the Women’s Advisory Board. An inclusive process will be vital to ensure a fair and sustainable agreement to end the devastating conflict in the country.

The United Nations has continued to support the Geneva International Discussions on security and stability and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees in Georgia. Four rounds of the Discussions were convened in 2017, chaired jointly by the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Since 2008, the Geneva International Discussions have provided participants with a vital platform to discuss their differences, prevent a return to violence and address humanitarian issues.

UN Geneva, with its skilled staff and state-of-the-art facilities, hosted and facilitated these efforts. In the Office of the Director-General, a senior mediation officer supports the work of mediators and helps them connect with the rich and diverse “peace community” based in Geneva. The partnership between the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, think tanks and the academic community has made additional specialized resources available in support of the ongoing work for peace.



At the press briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, on the last day of the fifth round of the Intra-Syrian Talks (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



INTRA-SYRIAN TALKS

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, briefs the press on the last day of the seventh round of the Intra-Syrian Talks. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



A journalist consults a map of the Syrian Arab Republic during a press conference by the Special Advisor to the Special Envoy for Syria, Jan Egeland. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Bilateral meeting during the fourth round of the Intra-Syrian Talks (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, during the fourth round of the Intra-Syrian Talks (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, welcomes a delegation of Syrian women on the opening day of the fourth round of the Intra-Syrian Talks. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



A journalist captures on his smartphone the welcoming remarks of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, to the delegates to the fourth round of the Intra-Syrian Talks. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



Shadows of participants in a press conference at the fifth round of the Intra-Syrian Talks (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



From left to right: Elizabeth Spehar, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus; Sir Alan Duncan, Minister of State for Europe and the Americas at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey; Nicos Anastasiades, Greek Cypriot leader; António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Mustafa Akıncı, Turkish Cypriot leader; Nikos Kotzias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece; Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; and Espen Barth Eide, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus; during the Conference on Cyprus (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres (left), with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades (centre) and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı (right), at a working lunch during the Conference on Cyprus (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



CYPRUS TALKS

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres (centre), with the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı (left) and the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades (right), during the Conference on Cyprus (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres (centre), giving a press conference with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades (left) and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı (right), during the Conference on Cyprus (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Delegates arrive at the Conference on Cyprus. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



At the press briefing held after the first session of the Conference on Cyprus (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



Journalists at the press briefing held after the first session of the Conference on Cyprus (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)

PEACE REPORTERS

War reporting is often about battles and body counts. As the saying goes: if it bleeds, it leads. Being a “peace reporter” at UN Geneva is something else altogether.

Peace negotiations are lengthy and nuanced processes whose gains are often difficult to measure. Covering these negotiations from a UN perspective, to promote peace, while also supporting coverage by media organizations with different viewpoints and interests, is a special challenge – but one familiar to the UN Geneva television and radio team.

The Intra-Syrian Talks provide a clear example of how peace reporters deal with this challenge.

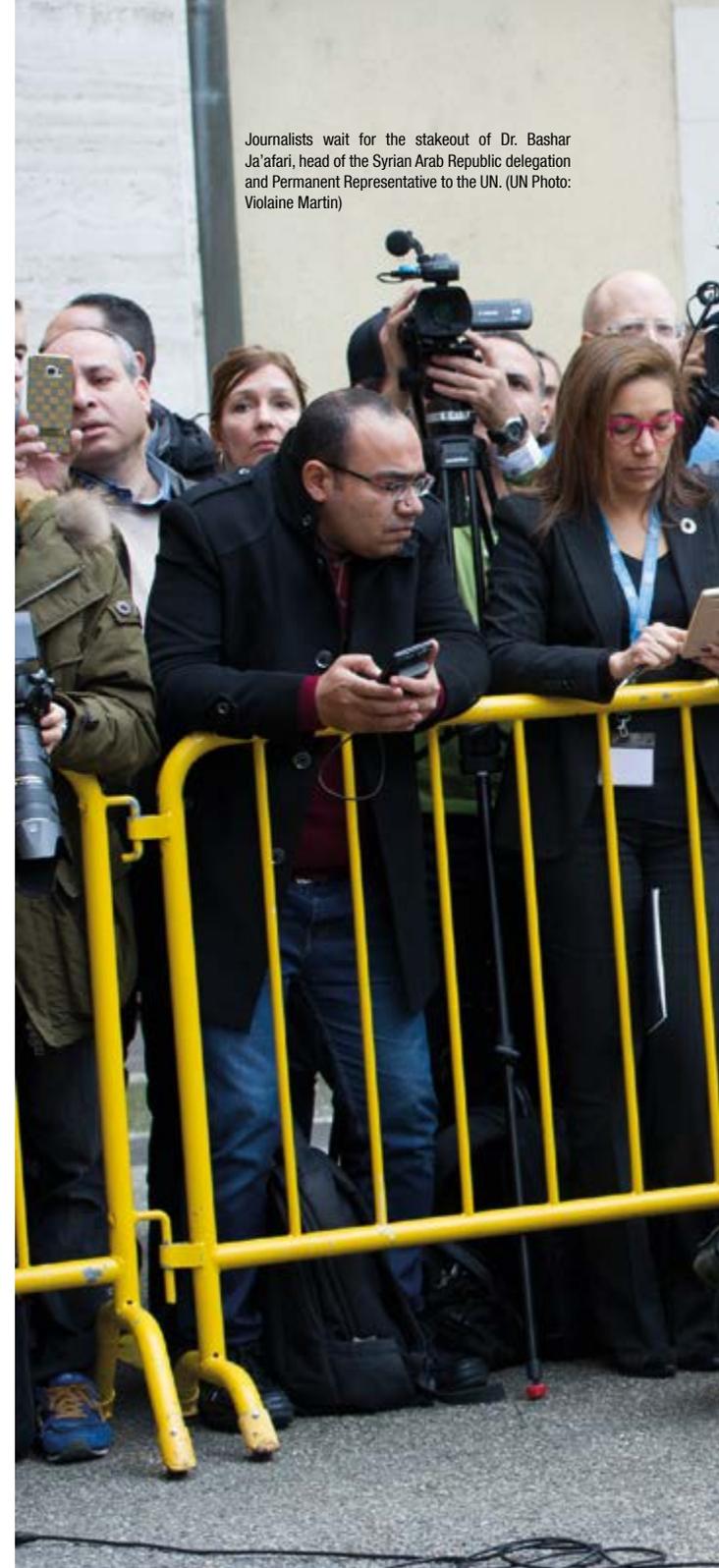
In 2017 there was progress on the humanitarian front reported regularly from the Thursday afternoon media stakeouts at UN Geneva for TV, radio and web. There had been no direct negotiations, only “proximity talks”, in which the parties do not meet face-to-face. But that did not stop hundreds of journalists from covering every angle of the five rounds of talks held at the Palais des Nations this year. UN Web TV offered live and on-demand remote access to all press opportunities, day or night.

From a peace reporting perspective, the real challenge was to convey the Intra-Syria Talks story with a symbolic image – beyond the arrivals, the handshakes, the departures and the formal opportunities for the press.

That opportunity came on 23 February, when the Special Envoy for Syria carefully choreographed a diplomatic ballet that would have all the parties meet face to face for the first time, in the UN Geneva Assembly Hall. UNTV cameras remained discreetly tucked away until all the participants were gathered. Meanwhile, dozens of camera operators and photographers waited just outside the gallery, unaware of what was about to happen, so as not to risk scuttling the photo op.

As the delegations entered the Assembly Hall one by one, the air became tense. The journalists outside had been waiting for more than an hour, their tempers rising. Finally, at just the right moment, the seats were filled. UNTV cameras were raised onto tripods. UN photos were snapped. The doors to the gallery were opened for the world’s media to witness this unique, historic moment, when the Syrian parties would look each other in the eye, under the UN Emblem.

Journalists wait for the stakeout of Dr. Bashar Ja’afari, head of the Syrian Arab Republic delegation and Permanent Representative to the UN. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)





CHANGING COMMUNICATIONS FOR CHANGING TIMES

“We must be able to communicate better about what we do, in ways that everybody understands.

We need a substantial reform of our communications strategy, upgrading our tools and platforms to reach people around the world.”

– Excerpt from the remarks of Secretary-General António Guterres to the General Assembly, on taking the oath of office, 12 December 2016

Heeding the call of Secretary-General António Guterres for better communications, the UN Information Service, Geneva, embraced new initiatives in 2017 to reach more people in more ways.

As part of a new editorial policy, multimedia producers now craft news stories for the UN News Centre that use a variety of multimedia – including text, audio, video and photos – to tell a more complete and engaging story.

In 2017, UN Radio Geneva expanded its reach both at home and abroad. It established partnerships to increase its presence in developing countries and worked with UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Haiti to attract new listeners. Back in Geneva, UN Radio collaborated with World Radio Switzerland to create the weekly program, “What’s on at the UN?” to present news highlights from the Palais des Nations.

With audiences demanding content tailored to particular platforms, UNTV continues to produce video optimized for different display media. This might mean cutting a “clean” video without titles for broadcasters, a subtitled video with graphics for social media, a 20-second silent version for live displays and a 10-second spot in a vertical format for screens at Geneva Airport. Whether it’s short and sleek or long and layered, whether it’s in English or French (or Spanish, or Chinese, or even Portuguese), UNTV is spreading its content to the people of the world.

Already reaching thousands of people each year through conferences, community outreach and collaboration, UN Geneva enjoys a higher profile than ever before, thanks to recent social media efforts. Engagement and followers on Twitter and Facebook exploded in 2017, with Facebook’s fan base doubling within the year. The UN Geneva Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts now have more than half a million followers combined.



Journalists film and share updates on social media during the Intra-Syrian Talks.
(UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



A journalist watches UN Web TV during a press briefing. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



Bertrand Piccard, Swiss psychiatrist and balloonist, is interviewed by UN Radio as a convoy of electric cars, travelling from Marrakech to the COP 23 in Bonn, drives through the Place des Nations. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

HIGH-PROFILE VISITS AND MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

As one of the largest conference centres in Europe, UN Geneva is the birthplace of crucial decisions that improve peace, rights and well-being worldwide. In 2017, the Palais des Nations welcomed high-profile world leaders to its grounds and hosted conferences, working groups and events whose decisions impact us all, every day. These included some of the year's most important international conferences, such as the International Labour Conference, the World Health Assembly and the Internet Governance Forum.

In addition to providing the venue, UN Geneva supplies all essential organizational, administrative, security, logistical, technical and documentation support for conferences and events. Communications specialists, from UN journalists to tweeters, also work around the clock to bring the work of the United Nations and its partners to a global audience.

In 2017, UN Geneva hosted 12,000 meetings, a number that has been steadily increasing as UN Geneva becomes the venue of choice for the international community and beyond.



Secretary-General António Guterres (right) at a press conference with Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades (centre) and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı (left) during the Cyprus Talks on 12 January (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



A magnificent cloisonné vase, offered by President of China Xi Jinping on the occasion of his visit to Geneva, is unveiled before Secretary-General António Guterres on 18 January. (UN Photo: Pierre Albouy)



The Director-General greets President of Chile Michelle Bachelet (centre) and Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli, President of the Human Rights Council, eleventh cycle (right) on 29 March. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

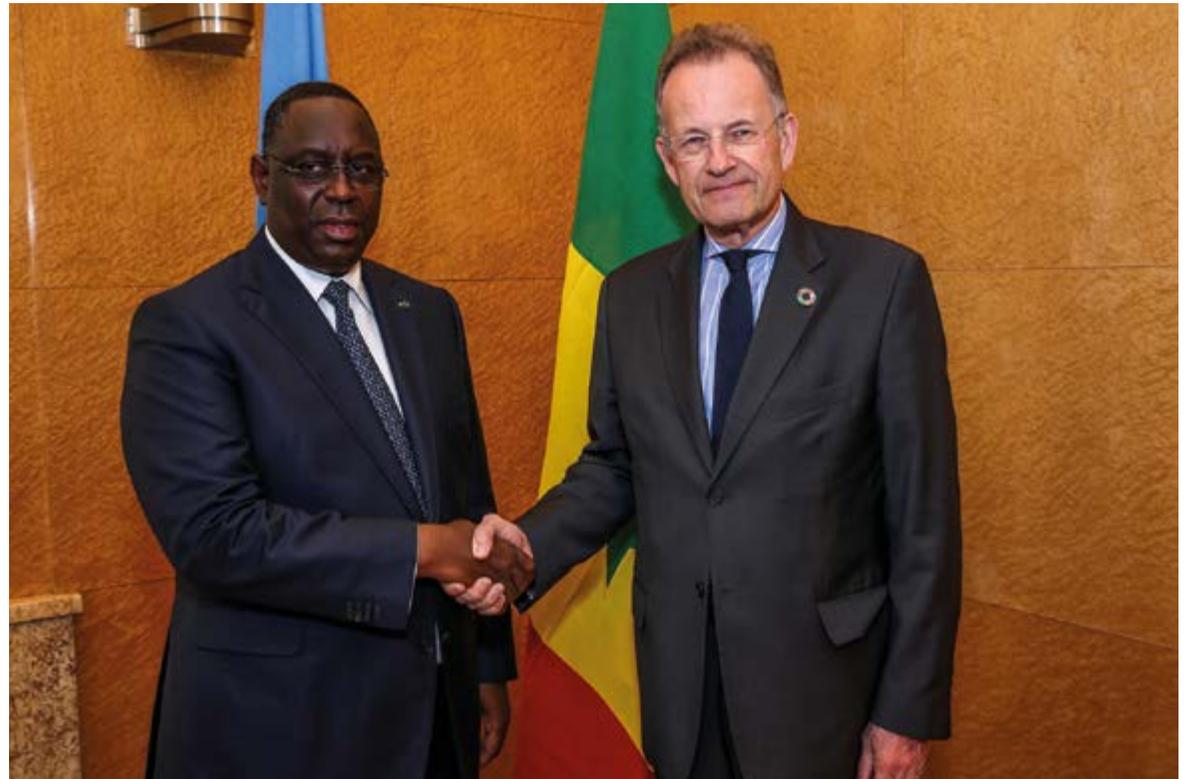


Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, calls for international protection of the Palestinian people in his address during the high-level segment of the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. (UN Photo: Elma Okic)

It was standing room only when Angelina Jolie, UNHCR Special Envoy for Refugee Issues, delivered the Sergio Vieira de Mello Memorial Lecture at the Palais des Nations on 15 March. (UN Photo: UNHCR)



The Director-General welcomes Macky Sall, President of Senegal, to the Palais des Nations on 20 March. (UN Photo)





Secretary-General António Guterres briefs the press after the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen on 25 April. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



The Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra addresses the thirty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council on 27 September. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

Yusra Mardini, a Syrian teenager, Olympic swimmer and refugee, was introduced as the youngest UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador at the Palais des Nations on 27 April. (UNHCR: Susan Hopper)



After Brazilian football superstar Neymar Jr. was named the Goodwill Ambassador for Handicap International during a press conference on 15 August, he was taken on a tour of the Palais des Nations with the Director-General. (UN Photo: Elma Okic)





President of Guyana David Granger (left) at an event to celebrate a world unified to tackle mercury's threat to human health and the environment on 28 September (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Burkina Faso President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré meets with the Director-General on 16 October. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, addresses the twelfth annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum on 18 December. (UN Photo: Jean Marc Ferré)

GENEVA PEACE TALKS: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR PEACE

What do a former neo-Nazi, an editor, an architect, two cooks and a former UN Secretary-General have in common? All six have helped to build metaphorical – and in one case, real – bridges between individuals and communities. All six also took part in the fifth edition of the Geneva Peace Talks, an event organized by UN Geneva, Interpeace and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform to mark the International Day of Peace on 21 September. Sharing personal stories around the theme of “building bridges”, 11 speakers from all walks of life illustrated how each individual can have a meaningful impact on peace by building bridges in their communities.

Former neo-Nazi Christian Picciolini recounted how he left a hate group in the United States of America and, through his NGO Life After Hate, now helps other people cross that bridge. The head of the IRIN news agency, Heba Aly, emphasized the need for empathy and for quality journalism that fosters interest in the lives and ideas of others. Architect Azra Hadzic took the audience on a journey through the rebuilding of the famed Stari Most bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was destroyed during the conflict in the 1990s. Saba Temelso and Dan Stein of Cuisine Lab shared their insights on the grassroots project in Geneva that brings together refugees to cook a meal and build community. Finally, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan shared some of his experiences in conflict mediation and urged the young people present to make their voices heard in the halls of power.

Over 900 people participated in the 2017 Geneva Peace Talks, and left inspired to become bridge builders in their own communities.

IRIN director Heba Aly speaks of the need for journalism that builds bridges. (Photo courtesy of Interpeace: Antoine Tardy)



Korean violinist Hyung Joon Won performs at the event. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan speaks at the 2017 Geneva Peace Talks. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

GENEVA PEACE WEEK

“Geneva really is a city of peace. Geneva Peace Week shows how its global footprint is much larger than its real size.”

- A participant at Geneva Peace Week 2017

What does the word “impact” bring to mind? Decisive action, inspiring rhetoric, creative solutions? What about bringing people together to share ideas, exchange best practices and forge partnerships? This was the idea behind the fourth edition of Geneva Peace Week, which took place at the Palais des Nations and across International Geneva in November 2017. Nearly 5,000 participants took part in 50 events featuring more than 150 speakers around the theme of prevention, a priority for Secretary-General António Guterres. In-person attendance nearly doubled this year over last, and online engagement grew, with social media seeing more than 650,000 impressions.

Another leading theme was the need to harness the power of technology to foster peace in the midst of digitization. Discussions covered the potentials of e-commerce, big data, artificial intelligence and geographic information systems to foster changes in the fields of prevention and peacebuilding. The event also explored new threats to cybersecurity – a key issue for International Geneva, which has long been at the forefront of Internet governance issues and which hosts many organizations dedicated to peace and security.

Geneva Peace Week was facilitated by UN Geneva, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, with support from the Swiss Confederation. Some hundred organizers – UN entities, NGOs, research centres and foundations – hosted events ranging from moderated panels and exhibitions to film screenings.



Brad Smith, president and chief legal officer of Microsoft, speaking at the Geneva Lecture Series 2017 held during Geneva Peace Week (UN Photo: Elma Okic)



Enrico Formica, Senior Mediation Officer, facilitates a discussion on mediation during Geneva Peace Week.

JOINING FORCES FOR A SAFER, URBAN FUTURE

Our future is urban. Today, over half of humanity – some 3.5 billion people – live in cities, making them hubs of commerce, culture and science. The pull of cities will only grow in the decades to come, with nearly 60% of the world's population expected to live in urban areas by 2030. While urbanization offers opportunities, it also brings challenges, especially in developing countries, where 95% of the world's urban expansion is expected to take place in the coming decades. In these countries, rapid growth often outstrips the development of the infrastructure, institutions and norms needed to provide basic services and a good quality of life. Left unaddressed, this disparity exacerbates the inequalities that fuel crime and radicalization.

Making sure that the cities of tomorrow are safe for all requires a holistic approach, one that places prevention front and centre by focusing on the drivers of criminality and radicalization. To that end, UN Geneva hosted in June 2017 the International Expert Conference and High-Level Panel on Reviewing the State of Safety in Cities. Bringing together experts around the theme of “Partnerships and Solutions for Localized Implementation”, the conference built on the holistic vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

While recognizing the essential role of national Governments, the conference focused on the need for localized implementation. The product of lessons learned from decades of development work, this mindset recognizes that solutions must be based on the needs of local communities, be owned by local stakeholders and be open to the ideas of grassroots actors. The conference emphasized the need for more cross-cutting partnerships and exchanges of best practices, its participants benefitting from International

Geneva's unique diversity of actors, wealth of expertise and collaborative mentality.

The high-level panel and conference were co-organized by the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, in collaboration with UN Geneva; the International Committee of the Red Cross; the UN Development Programme; the Graduate Institute Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding; the Geneva International Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; and the Small Arms Survey.



Urban landscape in Dhaka, Bangladesh (UN Photo)

OBSERVANCE AND ACTION

Commemoration and international days preserve memories and inspire change for a more diverse and tolerant world for all.

International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust

27 January 2017

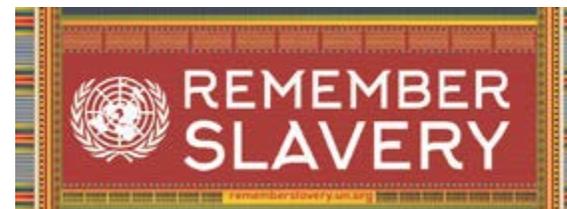
As the number of living survivors of the Holocaust dwindles, survivor Dr. Elie Wiesel spoke at the Palais des Nations on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. He recalled all victims, chiefly Jews but also Roma, Gypsies, homosexuals, people with disabilities, political opponents and anyone else considered “deviant”. “I testify to save them from oblivion,” he said.

The theme of this year’s commemoration was “Holocaust Remembrance: Educating for a Better Future”. The event featured a musical interlude by the German Radio Orchestra, the Misgav Hagalil Choir and the Bayreuth Zamir Choir.

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

25 March 2017

The transatlantic slave trade was one of the most dreadful tragedies ever perpetrated by humankind. An exhibition at UN Geneva to mark the day examined the historical significance of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. It also outlined ways in which the international community could honour the memory of the victims and take concrete action to improve the lives of people of African descent today.



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda

7 April 2017

In April 1994, more than 800,000 people, mainly Tutsi, perished in three short weeks in Rwanda, in one of the darkest chapters of human history. Justine Mudahogora survived, and shared her testimony with those gathered at the Palais des Nations, including the association of genocide survivors IBUKA, Memory and Justice (Swiss section). Participants welcomed the Kwibuka23 flame and lit candles in memory of the victims of the genocide. Kwibuka, which means “to remember” in Kinyarwanda, aims to preserve the memory of the genocide for historical clarity, and, through discussions and exchange, pave a way to a better future. “We mourn the lost and renew our commitment to prevent genocide,” tweeted the Director-General on the occasion.



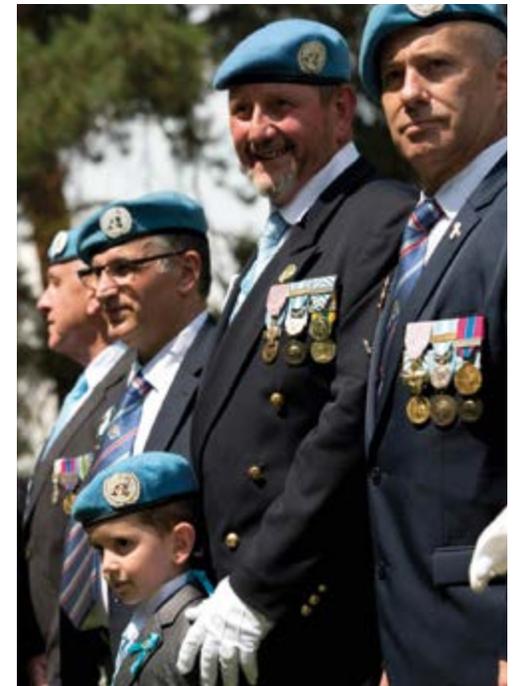
UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

31 May 2017

On 31 May, UN Geneva paid tribute to over 3,500 women and men who lost their lives in the service of peace since 1948. One of them was Captain Mbaye Diagne, a peacekeeper from Senegal, in whose name the Security Council created a medal for exceptional courage in 2014. During the genocide in Rwanda, Captain Diagne refused to be a bystander in the face of evil; he saved hundreds of lives before he lost his own in a roadside explosion on 31 May 1994.

At a panel discussion on investing in peace around the world, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, High Commissioner for Human Rights; Major General Kristin Lund, former Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and the first woman to ever lead a UN peacekeeping force; and a number of former peacekeepers discussed the challenges – and offered some solutions – for peacekeepers and their commanders in today’s complex missions – where there is often no peace to keep. They also addressed the hard questions that participating schoolchildren asked, such as: “Is it hard for a peacekeeper to have a rifle and not be able to use it?” and “Can you serve in a peacekeeping mission with your sibling?”



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

Nelson Mandela International Day

18 July 2017

The life and legacy of the revered leader for justice, peace and human rights, Nelson Mandela, the beloved Madiba, inspired some 150 attendees at a commemoration to take action against poverty and improve the lives of others.

“Mandela’s values and spirit are essential to achieving the goal of eradicating poverty. Inherent to this is a South African tenet of Ubuntu, which means that we all share a common humanity. Mandela was an embodiment of Ubuntu,” said Nozipho Joyce Mxakato-Diseko, the Permanent Representative of South Africa to UN Geneva.

World Humanitarian Day

19 August 2017

On 19 August, International Geneva and its partners gathered at the Palais des Nations to mark World Humanitarian Day and to support the global #NotATarget campaign.

The ceremonies and events held that day emphasized the global commitment to the safety of those risking their lives to help victims of conflicts and disasters. Outside the Palais des Nations, organizers installed the wreck of an ambulance ambushed in a conflict zone. It was a vivid reminder of the risks humanitarian workers brave every day to serve those most in need.

The Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation presented its 2017 award at the World Humanitarian Day ceremony to Dr. Rebecca Samuel Dali of Nigeria for her work helping girls abducted by Boko Haram to reintegrate into society.



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré



UN Photo: Violaine Martin

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October 2017

For 30 years, people living in poverty all over the world have come together on the same day to speak out against extreme poverty. On 17 October, UN Geneva joined hands with ATD Fourth World-Switzerland to renew the commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1, which aims to end extreme poverty by 2030.

The children's choir from Collège de Fuveau in France opened the commemoration. Tabori, a youth initiative of ATD Fourth World for friendship between the world's children, gave a dazzling musical performance. The programme also featured a musical play, "Hidden Colours", which used mime and music to tell a story of a young boy living in poverty and suffering social injustice and exclusion in Switzerland, and which called for solidarity and social cohesion.



UN Photo: Violaine Martin

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

29 November 2017

Permanent Missions and partner organizations gathered in room 18 to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November. On that day in 1947, the General Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine. Beyond Geneva, meetings in observance of the day are held every year at UN Headquarters and UN Vienna.

Amany Abu Awad delivered a statement on behalf of the World Young Women's Christian Association. "Solidarity", she said, "demands our personal and collective action and our commitment to work for justice and sustainable peace."



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

LEADING THE WAY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

“Achieving gender parity is a key objective of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Gender Champions network is a catalyst for a new way of working across the traditional divide between all entities of International Geneva.”

– Director-General Michael Møller

In its second year of existence, the International Gender Champions network worked towards building partnerships, making an impact and opening up to new people and places.

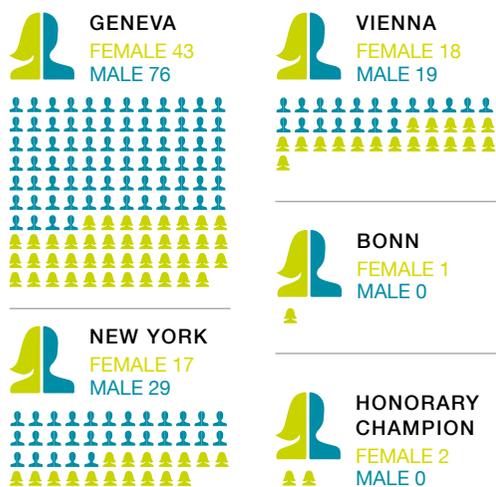
The network marked International Women’s Day on 8 March with a special event on gender equality and sports. Attended by the heads of nearly fifty international sports federations and international organizations, the event was an opportunity for the network to open up to a new audience of decision makers who can help achieve progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 5: achieving gender equality.

International Gender Champions expanded in 2017, with the network of senior leaders going global. As of December 2017, 205 champions had joined the initiative, of which 60% were based in Geneva and two-thirds were men. The initiative has continued to grow both in Geneva and in other multilateral hubs, with new hubs launched in New York in March and in Vienna in June, and sister chapters set to take off in Nairobi and Bonn-Berlin.

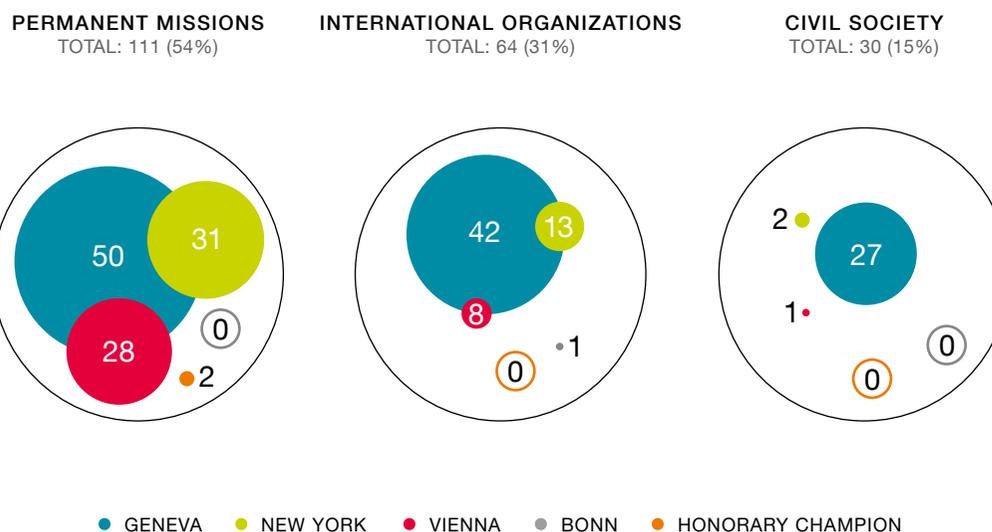
Secretary-General António Guterres and many of his senior colleagues at UN Headquarters became gender champions this year. His new gender parity strategy explicitly refers to the gender champions initiative. In 2017, two outstanding leaders were designated as honorary gender champions for their groundbreaking work on gender equality: President of Chile Michelle Bachelet and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Margot Wallström.

The network’s impact groups focus on specific topics and sectors where change is needed. From the joint publication with UN Women on raising women’s voice in intergovernmental forums, to the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, the network constantly pushed for transformative change in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, which is fundamental to all the other goals.

2017 year-end statistics on current gender champions



FEMALE: TOTAL 81 (39%) - MALE: TOTAL 124 (61%)





Christophe De Kepper, Director General of the International Olympic Committee, on International Women's Day (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



To listen to a podcast on the International Gender Champions created by the Permanent Mission of the United States of America, scan the QR code.

The Jet d'Eau fountain in Geneva lit up in the International Gender Champions colours for International Women's Day (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

POLICY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

“Bad habits and bureaucracy are hard to change. There are deep roots that need to be cut and that’s what we’re in the process of doing. You have to change the work culture. For example, I put in place a gender policy that we didn’t have before, and the structure to implement it. The trick is to follow through and hold people accountable to it.”

– Director-General Michael Møller speaking in the iKNOW Politics and International Gender Champions Facebook Live discussion on 3 October on the role of male champions in promoting women’s leadership.

2017 was the first full year the UN Geneva gender policy was implemented, and the year to test whether the goals outlined in the policy could be achieved. In order to expand work on gender equality beyond the UN Geneva gender team, the Director-General approved the establishment of the first-ever UN Geneva Gender Steering Group, whose members are responsible for providing the direction needed to put the gender policy into practice.

The clear accountability framework and strong commitment by senior management have had a significant impact on UN Geneva, helping to mobilize staff and to create the momentum needed to achieve important breakthroughs. For their efforts in implementing the gender policy on a daily basis, the Gender Champions Team won the 2017 UN Secretary-General’s award for gender equality and parity.

Work remains to be done. The 2017 UN Geneva gender survey found differing perceptions between male and female staff around access to career opportunities, sexist behaviour, equal opportunities and taking action against inappropriate behaviour. These are areas the steering group will continue to address in 2018.

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Including gender-related goals and actions in the work plans of heads of services and divisions
- Issuing guidance on gender-related training and reintegration of staff following maternity leave
- Organizing leadership training for female staff members
- Delivering unconscious bias training for managers
- Conducting the gender survey



Team designated to promote gender equality at UN Geneva (UN Photo)

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

“Disarmament and arms control processes provide the breathing space for confidence to be built, stability to be strengthened and trust to be established.”

– Secretary-General António Guterres

In a world of increasing complexity and strategic uncertainty, disarmament and arms control measures strengthen peace and security – two fundamental building blocks for progress on sustainable development and human rights. However, nearly 30 years after the cuts in military spending that followed the end of the Cold War, disarmament faces a setback as global military expenditures rises and nuclear weapons play an ever larger role in defence doctrines.

In this destabilizing environment, both nuclear-weapon states and their counterparts urgently need to find common ground to reverse these trends. As the only multilateral disarmament forum, the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament is uniquely positioned to foster multilateral, inclusive, and constructive solutions.

The UN General Assembly created the Conference on Disarmament in 1979, following on the heels of a series of successful disarmament negotiations held on the shores of Lake Geneva. Among these were the talks that led to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968). This treaty seeks to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament as well as general and complete disarmament.

The 65 Member States of the Conference on Disarmament meet to discuss critical issues, including nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, transparency in armaments, and new types of weapons of mass destruction. The Conference on Disarmament successfully concluded negotiations on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (1992) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (1996). The Director-General of UN Geneva, Michael Möller, serves as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as the personal representative of the UN Secretary-General to the Conference.

The 2017 plenary meetings saw wide-ranging discussions on nuclear disarmament, fissile material, negative security assurances, prevention of an arms race in outer space and new types of weapons of mass destruction. Given the difficulties in agreeing on a programme of work, the Conference established a working group on the “way ahead” to identify common ground. In spite of differences, the discussions demonstrated a strong political will among most delegations in the Conference to work towards a mutually agreeable approach to disarmament.



Delegates taking part in the High-Level Segment of the 2017 session of the Conference on Disarmament in February 2017 (UN Photo: Anne-Laure Lechat)

PROMOTING THE CONCEPT OF GREENING

One of UN Geneva's roles is that of a facilitator. As such, UN Geneva sees itself as an enabler for making the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a reality. UN Geneva has made many efforts to promote the concept of greening. At times UN Geneva plays a significant role, with highly visible actions. Some of its other actions may be less noticeable, even though they have an equally important impact. The vignettes below are some examples of UN Geneva's small, often unseen efforts to promote greening of the United Nations.

Demonstration of a self-driving vehicle in the grounds of the Palais des Nations

UN Geneva facilitated the demonstration of a self-driving electric shuttle in the grounds of the Palais des Nations in February. The event was held to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Economic Commission for Europe's Inland Transport Committee and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals related to road safety, reduction of air pollution levels, climate change and sustainable cities. The environmentally friendly shuttle ensured the safety of its passengers, driving at low speed and avoiding obstacles, and was very comfortable. For the occasion, the driverless vehicle transported ministers, senior decision makers in the transportation field and UN staff members.

The successful demonstration illustrated how important it is to pay close attention to driverless transport, whose technology is being constantly improved. In the near future, such vehicles could, for example, take passengers with reduced mobility between the last public transport stop and their final destination.

More charging stations for electric vehicles

In 2014, UN Geneva installed eight charging stations for electric vehicles, each covered by a photovoltaic shelter, to encourage staff members to adopt greener commuting habits and in line with UN Geneva's goal of reducing its environmental footprint. This was made possible thanks to a generous donation from Switzerland.

The initiative was such a success that the charging stations were regularly all in use. In response, and thanks in part to a donation from the Republic of Moldova, four additional charging stations were installed in 2017, bringing the total number of vehicles that can recharge at any one time at the Palais des Nations to 12.



UN Photo: Violaine Martin

Ariana Park's beekeeper

A passionate and determined beekeeper, Pascal Crétard perfectly embodies the movement towards sustainability. In fact, he chose his passion over a successful career in mobile telephony. UN Geneva is proud to have Mr. Crétard as its beekeeper, as he exemplifies the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals in his work with bees and in his decision to change the course of his life.

This passion began when he took training courses at the Geneva Society of Apiculture. Today, Mr. Crétard is the Society's president, teaches beekeeping, and raises awareness among children about the importance of bees and pollination for biodiversity. A specialist who takes care of five apiaries, he does his best to preserve the endangered Carniolan species.

Thanks to a donation to UN Geneva from the Government of Switzerland, Mr. Crétard has been given the opportunity to take care of the 10 beehives in Ariana Park. This apiary was set up in 2012 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Switzerland's accession to the United Nations (see the UN Geneva Annual Report 2012, pp. 9–10).

Speaking with Mr. Crétard, we learned that he sets great store by UN Geneva's commitment to the biodiversity of Ariana Park (see the UN Geneva Annual Report 2016, p. 49), as this is a key factor in the well-being of the bees and his success as a beekeeper.



Two of the apiaries in Ariana Park (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

PROCURING AS ONE

“We are not working for shareholders to increase their profits; we are working for people who suffer around the world. There is a moral obligation to do as much as we can and in the best possible way.”

– Secretary-General António Guterres

To live up to the trust placed in it by the people it serves, the UN must become more effective, nimble and accountable. It must re-examine how it operates, finding innovative ways to be more efficient. UN Geneva is doing its part, including through its participation in the Common Procurement Activities Group. This initiative brings together the procurement offices of 19 UN entities and international organizations in Geneva to achieve efficiencies through shared contracts.

In 2017, this group saved a collective \$35 million by using existing contracts, sharing tenders and leveraging economies of scale.

Sharing knowledge, information and resources is at the heart of the Group. In 2017, Group members undertook five joint tenders and exchanged information on over 80 occasions. The information exchanged included active contracts, terms of reference, professional input on procurement practices and experience with vendor performance.

In 2017, the Group expanded with the addition of the UN International Computing Centre, a leading provider of information and communications technology in the UN System. The Centre is set to strengthen collaboration on IT matters, a vital step to meet the fiscal challenges of our digital future.

72 YEARS PROTECTING UN GENEVA

For those working in the Palais des Nations, it is as much a part of their morning routine as a cup of coffee: the security check at the gate, conducted by the blue uniformed guards. The men and women of the UN Security and Safety Service are stayed neither by snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor darkness from accomplishing their task: protecting the Palais des Nations and its occupants. In 2017, they screened 485,374 vehicles and 234,082 people for entry to the Palais des Nations. Officers in plain clothes also worked behind the scenes to strengthen the security and safety of the premises.

Security officers bring a diverse set of skills and a wealth of experience to UN Geneva, providing essential support in:

- Threat and risk assessment
- Close protection of visiting Heads of State, Heads of Government and other high-level officials
- Security investigations following accidents on the premises
- Logistics and IT

To keep abreast of the latest trends in the field, 222 security officers were trained in areas such as first aid, close protection, fire prevention and active shooter response in 2017. Over 1,200 hours of security training were provided, including to staff of other International Geneva organizations. The Service also partnered with the UN Geneva Medical Service to train Geneva-based staff and delegates, and those travelling to high-risk locations, in emergency preparedness.

In addition to the Service's work in Geneva, 39 security officers provided 362 days of support to 23 field missions around the world, facilitating critical work in human rights and in peace and security.

Security officers participate in the Major Incident Medical Management and Support training at the Palais des Nations. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



CREATING THE “BLUE ZONE”: HOW THE EXPERTISE OF THE SECURITY AND SAFETY SERVICE FOUND ITS WAY TO CHINA

If they do their work well, they go unnoticed. Security officers work seamlessly behind the scenes to create a safe and secure environment for high-level events. The unseen work that goes into planning and preparation help make major conferences like the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Ordos, China, a success.

To guarantee the safety of conference participants and to protect the integrity of the United Nations premises in Ordos, experienced and highly-trained security officers from the Security and Safety Services of Geneva and Bangkok were deployed. “The most challenging aspect of such missions is the need to orient yourself quickly and adapt easily to working in a new and unfamiliar location, combined with the need to establish a relationship based on trust with host country authorities,” said Lieutenant Christophe Loison of the Geneva Service.

The conference’s security management was a joint endeavour between the UN and China. As with all major external UN events, it was critical to define the responsibilities of the United Nations and the host country. For such events, a “Blue Zone”, a UN controlled zone, is created through a memorandum of understanding. This agreement stipulates that all security operations for the conference become the responsibility of the UN, from the time the blue flag is hoisted on the conference site until it is lowered after the gavel falls to close the conference. During this time, the Blue Zone is under the control of the UN, with the same status as the campus of the Palais des Nations or UN Headquarters in New York.

In addition to the Ordos conference, the Security and Safety Service deployed 22 security officers to support three other major events outside Geneva: the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Bonn, Germany; the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017, in Cancun, Mexico; and the seventy-second session of the UN General Assembly, at UN Headquarters.



Event Security Coordinator Woosung Yang and Lieutenant Christophe Loison at UN Geneva (UN Photo)

Protecting UN personnel, delegates and visitors so they can do their work is at the very heart of the UN Geneva Security and Safety Service.

A typical day at the Security Operations Centre begins at 5.45 a.m. The incoming team makes sure all systems are in working order: CCTV surveillance, the fire detection system, the access control system and the phone lines. In these early hours, before the switchboard operators arrive to take over the emergency line (112), the Centre responds to any emergency calls.

On a good day at the Centre, it's "business as usual". The team closely monitors CCTV surveillance and the more than 150 alarm systems of the Palais des Nations. They prepare documents and reports, answer emails and manage a range of administrative issues as well as emergency communications. If, for example, a suspicious object is detected, the Centre immediately notifies the canine explosive detection unit.

The Security Operations Centre is operated year-round by three teams working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Every minute of every day, the staff of the Centre are prepared to react quickly to ensure the integrity of the UN Geneva premises and the well-being of all staff, affiliates, delegates and visitors.

A DAY AT THE SECURITY OPERATIONS CENTRE



UN Photo

DETEX K9

Over the past 11 years, the UN Geneva Security and Safety Service has been developing a specialized unit for detecting explosives, weapons and ammunition. The unit, known as “DetEx K9” (Detection of Explosives – Canine), uses a variety of technologies, such as spectrometers, mobile X-ray equipment and devices that detect radioactivity and certain gases, to carry out this important work. The Unit’s well-trained dogs also play a critical role in ensuring the security and safety of the premises.

With the rise of terrorism, four new K9 handlers and four dogs reinforced the team in 2016. Before reporting for duty at UN Geneva, the dogs and their handlers underwent a rigorous five-week training course conducted by the Swiss Army, a certification that is renewed annually.

The DetEx K9 Unit now has seven dogs of different breeds, including German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, Dutch Shepherds and a Labrador Retriever. The dogs are not only diverse, but are also gender balanced, with three females and four males!

On a daily basis, the K9 handlers and their dogs ensure the security of conferences and other events taking place at the Palais des Nations. They are also sometimes called upon to secure the premises of other international organizations.

This expansion has positioned the DetEx K9 Unit on sound footing for further collaboration with the host country and has enabled partnerships for developing future explosives detection and knowledge sharing.

If you would like to learn more about the Unit, or to see the K9 dogs in action, follow them on Twitter @DetexK9 or on Facebook.



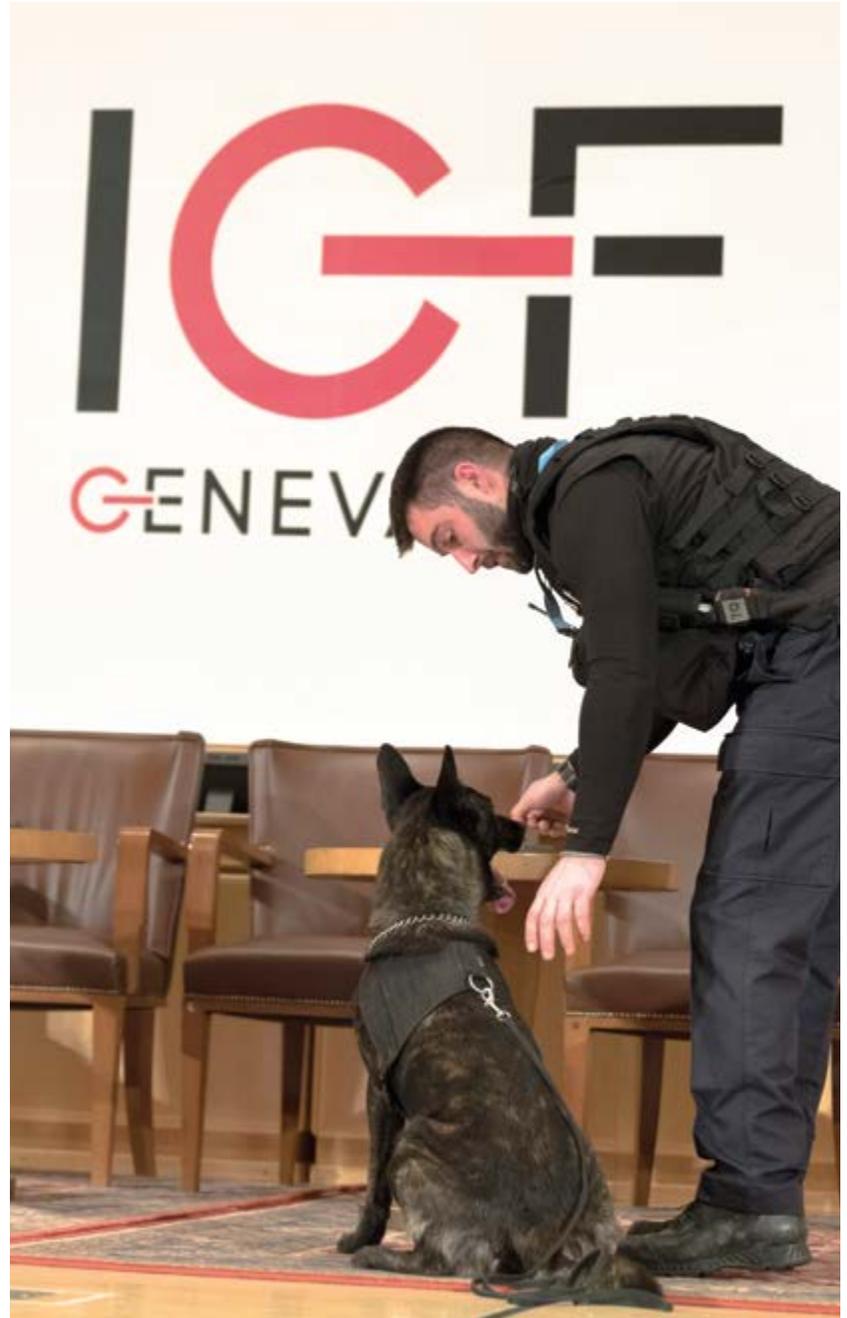
UN Photo



UN Photo



UN Photo



UN Photo: Jean Marc Ferré

IN THE DIGITAL AGE, PAPER DOCUMENTS ARE STILL IMPORTANT

Documents hold the information that conference participants need so they can discuss, and address, issues that affect our world. The UN Geneva conference management team edits, translates and formats the authors' words, producing versions in the UN's six official languages. Diplomats, experts and the general public can download these documents anywhere in the world. But what happens at a conference when the Wi-Fi goes down? Or delegates need to jot down ideas that they can quickly share with their colleagues? Or a laptop battery dies? Paper copies are available as a backup to the digital versions.

In 2017, the UN Geneva Division of Conference Management brought its document printing and distribution expertise to two external conferences: the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in Ordos, China, and the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Bonn, Germany.

In both Ordos and Bonn, the UN Geneva team was supported by local volunteers who helped manage the conference's documents counter. It was an eye-opening experience for volunteers, said documentation officer Rebecca Rellstab.

"When you see the amount of documents, it suddenly hits home how many committees there are, how many issues are being worked on and how complex the whole conference and process is," remarked one volunteer in Bonn.

Volunteers initially wondered about the role of paper in conferences on the sustainable use of resources – a company in Ordos had been contracted to print 200,300 pre-session documents in eight hours – but as they saw the conference unfold, they soon recognized its value.

"Even if it is not so environmentally friendly, we need to balance the cost and benefit. It is worth it if they achieve something," said another volunteer in Bonn. And of course, as per standard practice, both conferences offered opportunities to recycle the paper, a renewable natural resource.

The conferences were also instructive for UN Geneva staff members, offering them an opportunity to learn about climate change and desertification and to work with a diverse group of volunteers. Ordos, a city built on reclaimed desert land, was a telling setting for a desertification conference, said Daniel Chen, chief of the Production Unit of the Division's Production and Support Service. "Seeing with my own eyes how this city developed out of the desert, I realized how important it is to combat desertification."



Volunteers at the documents counter in Bonn (Photo courtesy of Ân Pham)

SIMPLER ACCESS, SHORTER QUEUES

The conference facilities at UN Geneva are the largest in the United Nations and are used by many thousands of people – delegates, representatives of non-governmental organizations, journalists, visitors and others. Getting so many people into the Palais des Nations swiftly and securely has been a challenge, and the Director-General sought a solution to long lines outside the gate. UN Geneva’s IT team reached out to colleagues at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and explored whether CERN’s conference registration platform would be a viable solution. To manage the flow of people effectively and, in the process, improve the conference experience, UN Geneva adapted and implemented CERN’s cost-effective open-source solution, Indico (Integrated Digital Conferencing). Indico has quickly become the central hub that connects people, technologies and processes across conference management functions.

Indico covers the complete conference life cycle – from creating a conference in the system, to registering and managing delegates and other participants, to issuing personalized access badges. This efficient and feature-rich tool also provides other benefits, such as accessing conference-related documents and multimedia content, information-sharing and even instant messaging.

The project teams at UN Geneva tailored the system to meet its users’ needs and UN Geneva’s exact security requirements. This included augmenting the original system’s functions with passport scanning and with QR codes on the “boarding passes”. These adjustments have been key to its success. And as more entities join, UN Geneva’s Indico evolves to respond to their specific needs. For Geneva-based delegates, the bigger Indico is, the better, because they can use one tool to access many events. Indico is also expanding to other UN duty stations and Geneva-based international organizations.

Recently, UN Geneva commissioned an IT security audit of Indico, and has used its results to make the system more secure. Meanwhile, CERN is adopting many of UN Geneva’s innovations into Indico’s core source code.

Registering people for conferences used to be a complex administrative task, but Indico has made things easier for conference managers, for security staff, and most importantly for the people in the meeting room. When the Human Rights Council began using Indico for its thirty-fifth regular session, in June 2017, it freed the secretariat and delegates to focus on substantive matters by reducing the burden of administrative tasks.

The Indico project team at UN Geneva will continue to expand this state-of-the-art system, adding new functionalities such as for internal navigation within the Palais des Nations and self check-in at kiosks.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR- GENERAL



UN Geneva Director-General Michael Møller (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

The Director-General

Appointed by the Secretary-General, the Director-General is responsible for UN Geneva activities and serves as the Secretary-General's representative in Switzerland. The Director-General also serves as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and as the personal representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference.

UN Geneva engagement with the public, the private sector, civil society and Member States continues to grow through events ranging from high-level negotiations on Syria to UN Open Day, which invites the Geneva community into the Palais des Nations to learn more about UN Geneva. The Office of the Director-General provides critical support in these areas.

Informal luncheons yield collaboration

Achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will require collaboration and dedication. To facilitate this commitment, regular luncheons hosted by the Director-General and organized by the Protocol and Liaison Service bring together heads of agencies from International Geneva to break bread, exchange ideas and build partnerships.

In 2017, 17 luncheons were organized, gathering almost 40 heads of agencies.

Leaders of International Geneva organizations meet in the Delegates Restaurant in June. Attending were the heads of The Global Fund, ICRC, IPU, ITC, ITU, OHCHR, SUN, UN Geneva, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNISDR, WHO and WMO. (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



Front Office

In 2017, the Director-General undertook 19 missions, gave 26 interviews, tweeted 942 times and signed 503 letters. The Special Assistant to the Director-General provides dedicated substantive support to the Director-General in carrying out his responsibilities as executive head of the UN Office at Geneva.

Core support

The Office of the Director-General is a hub of activity, and a dedicated staff works diligently to keep everything moving. As Personal Assistant to the Director-General, Ms. Vilela is the bridge between Mr. Møller and the rest of the Office, managing his schedule and making sure his day runs smoothly.

Sophie Torelli Chironi, Special Assistant to the Director-General, takes notes during a senior management meeting. (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



Personal Assistant to the Director-General Christine Vilela (left) confers with Team Assistant Vera Ganich (right). (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



Legal Office

UN Geneva operates in a context of complex legal rules and regulations, whether internal UN rules or the legal framework of the host country, Switzerland. The Legal Office provides legal advice to the Director-General and other UN Geneva entities, as well as some Geneva based funds and programmes, and coordinates with the legal departments of other international organizations on legal issues, such as taxation, residency and naturalization requirements, and insurance.

Youth initiatives

With 1.8 billion young people on the planet, engaging youth to make a positive change is a key priority for the Director-General and for UN Geneva. “Our duty is to help strengthen the capacity of young generations to act as drivers of positive change,” the Director-General said at this year’s second pre-Human Rights Council Youth Forum. In 2017, UN Geneva also engaged young people with a “youth takeover” event at the Palais des Nations and its fourth Interns with a Mission debate.

Senior Legal Adviser Markus Schmidt validates an adoption order submitted by a staff member. (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



ODG staff and interns discuss a youth initiative. (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



Political Affairs and Partnerships Section

Politics, policy-making and peacebuilding come together in the Political Affairs and Partnerships Section, which supports the Director-General by conducting in-depth analysis and advising him on regional and international political issues. The Section also organizes events such as Executive Briefings for the Geneva diplomatic community, World Humanitarian Day and other major events at UN Geneva. In 2017, 35 Executive Briefings were organized for the international community.

Salman Bal, Chief of the Political Affairs and Partnerships Section, reviews documents as the Director-General is interviewed by a journalist. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



NGO Liaison Unit

Non-governmental organizations are crucial partners for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The NGO Liaison Unit is the first point of contact in Geneva for over 4,000 NGOs in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. The Unit provides information, assistance and guidance to NGOs in their engagement with the UN.

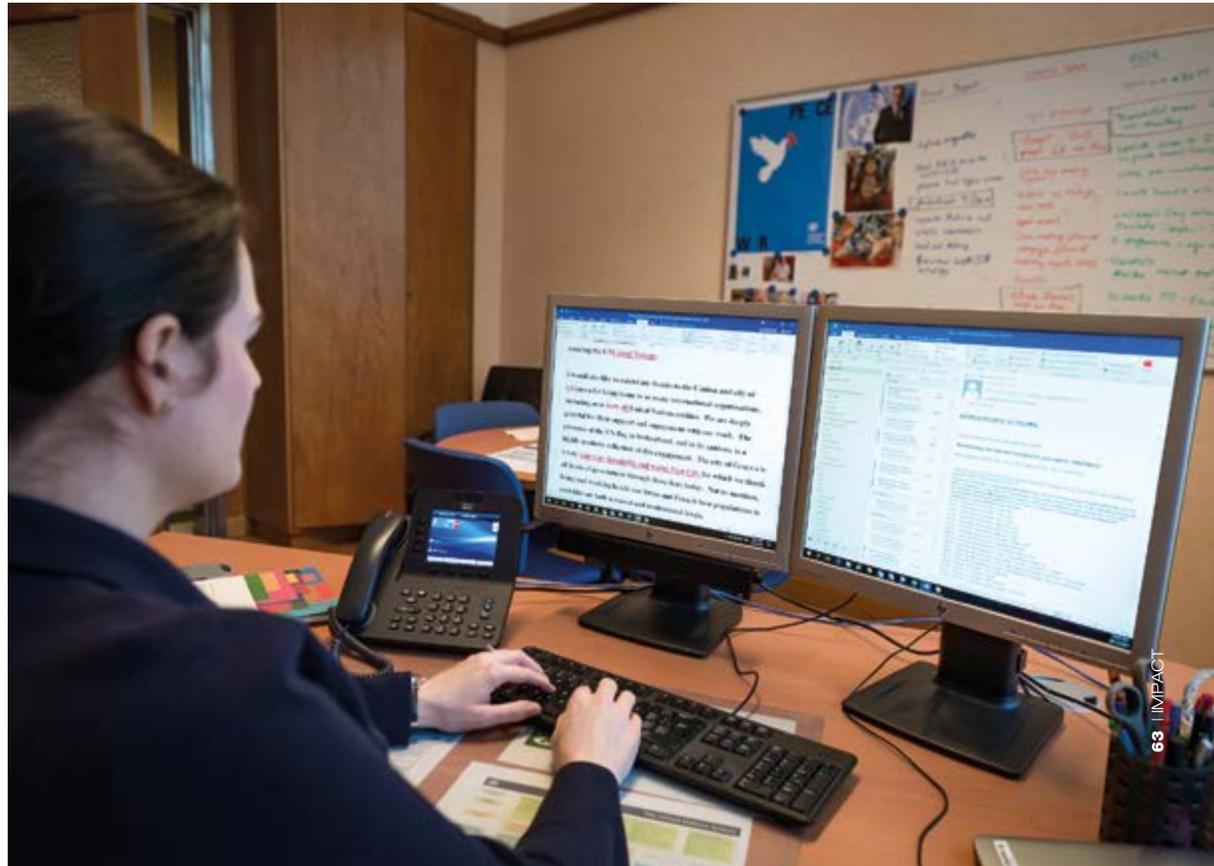
Chief of the NGO Liaison Unit Lidiya Grigoreva (left) briefs an NGO representative in the UN Geneva NGO Resource Center. (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



Document processing

The Office produces scores of pages of communications each day, including speeches, briefing notes, talking points, country profiles, articles, correspondence and the annual report. Speechwriters work on tight deadlines, sometimes on very short notice, to produce speeches that are clear, concise and impactful. In 2017, the Director-General delivered 172 speeches, each carefully composed by speechwriters, then reviewed by senior staff in the Office of the Director-General, by the Chef de Cabinet and by the Director-General himself.

Programme Management Officer Kathryn Hennessey edits a document for the Director-General. (UN Photo: Matija Potocnik)



Protocol and Liaison Service

When Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other high-level officials visit UN Geneva, the Protocol and Liaison Service collaborates closely with permanent missions of Member States to establish official programmes and ensure that visitors can focus on diplomacy without worrying about logistics. In 2017, a total of 85 bilateral meetings were held between the Director-General and high-level officials. The Service also prepares and coordinates special events and ceremonies at UN Geneva, and organizes the presentations of credentials by newly appointed permanent representatives. Thirty-three new permanent representatives presented their credentials in 2017.

Chief of Protocol Sergey Shaposhnikov (background right) works behind the scenes at a dinner organized by the Protocol and Liaison Service, hosted by Secretary-General António Guterres, in honour of the President of China, Xi Jinping, in January. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



An office in motion

Isaac Newton famously said that an object in motion will tend to stay in motion – and the Office of the Director-General is constantly in motion. As the Office continued to gain momentum in 2017 with greater outreach and engagement with Geneva’s organizations and the public, plus coordinating more high-profile meetings at the Palais des Nations, a dedicated team worked behind the scenes to make it all happen.

Chef de Cabinet

The Office of the Director-General is overseen by the Chef de Cabinet, David Chikvaïdze. The Chef de Cabinet provides policy advice and recommendations to the Director-General, coordinates the activities of the divisions and services of UN Geneva, and liaises with heads of mission and other high-ranking Member State representatives on substantive, political and procedural questions. He also manages the Office of the Director-General and provides oversight and guidance to the Office’s extra-budgetary projects.

Harriet Donkor, Assistant to the Chef de Cabinet (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Chef de Cabinet of the Office of the Director-General David Chikvaïdze greets Secretary-General António Guterres. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



OPENNESS

We are living in the midst of a technological revolution. Twenty years ago, only Governments and multinational firms could spread their messages around the world. Today, anyone with access to the Internet and a mobile phone can do the same. This revolution has given each one of us a voice, yet it has also undermined objectivity and the notion of shared facts. In their stead, misinformation and mistrust of public institutions have grown. In this landscape, yesterday's solutions are outdated and change is vital if the United Nations is to retain the public's trust. Only if it adapts to an increasingly interactive and non-hierarchical media landscape will the UN manage to make its voice heard. UN Geneva is doing its part, embracing new technologies and forging partnerships with like-minded actors to interact with new audiences. UN Geneva is also breaking down barriers between the UN and the public by opening the doors of the Palais des Nations to engage with Geneva and beyond.

BRINGING UN GENEVA TO THE WORLD

Following the news this year, you may have seen a clip of Special Advisor to the Special Envoy for Syria Jan Egeland speaking with reporters, or learned about the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights resolution condemning alleged systematic and gross violations of human rights committed against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

These and other high profile international news clips were produced by the UN Information Service, Geneva. With UN Geneva hosting more conferences and events than ever before, the service worked hard in 2017 to bring the richness of the work done at the Palais des Nations and throughout International Geneva to people all over the world.

Whether it's a press package highlighting the Cartooning for Peace Foundation or a story about the Conference on Cyprus developing a roadmap to a settlement, the Information Service continues to highlight the work done in Geneva by the UN, UN agencies and NGOs. Its television studio and transmission facilities provide a space for live interviews with UN officials and reports by journalists, which are distributed along with footage and news packages through the European Broadcasting Union and international television news agencies. The footage is also available online through UN Web TV, United Nations Radio and UNifeed.

This year the Information Service covered many high-profile events, each with its own responsibilities and challenges. January saw President of China Xi Jinping's visit to UN Geneva and keynote address, events that were broadcast to a global online audience. December closed out a busy year with coverage of the Internet Governance Forum, which involved the unprecedented challenge of streaming live video from as many as 13 rooms simultaneously. This feat was achieved thanks to collaboration with Radio Télévision Suisse and the European Broadcasting Union.

The Information Service in 2017 continued to cover recurring events at UN Geneva, with webcasts and social media coverage of the Human Rights Council sessions and human rights treaty bodies. In an increasingly digital and connected world, the service continues to amplify voices for peace, rights and well-being, and bring the Sustainable Development Goals to life for a global audience through television, radio, print and social media channels.



UN photographer Jean-Marc Ferré captures the thirty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



UN Information Service captures Google vice president Vinton Cerf (centre) during a press conference at the twelfth annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

THE SDG LAB HARNESSES THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE OF INTERNATIONAL GENEVA TO ACHIEVE THE SDGs

Geneva's concentration of actors, knowledge, expertise and decision-making power, as well as its cooperative mentality and extraordinary number of initiatives, make it a global hub for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In an effort to leverage the spirit of collaboration and innovation in Geneva, the Director-General launched the SDG Lab in January 2017. Throughout the year, the Lab has brought together a solid and diverse group of actors dedicated to the Goals, has connected groups to exchange knowledge and has shared best practices. The Lab embodies the guiding principles of the Goals:

Multi-stakeholder collaboration: The Lab and its advisers are composed of representatives from international organizations, national missions, academia and non-governmental organizations. The team comes from all corners of the world, with representatives from Europe (Switzerland), Africa (Nigeria), Latin America (Colombia), Asia (China), North America (Canada) and the Middle East (Lebanon). This diversity is a core strength of the Lab, enabling it to draw on a wealth of different experiences, perspectives, resources and connections.

Engaging the private sector: Recognizing the untapped potential of the private sector and the importance of collaborating and understanding the incentives for engaging outside organizations, the SDG Lab helped one start-up, the Millennium Institute, promote a tool that helps Governments understand the impact of their actions on the Goals. The tool is now used in several African countries.

The indivisibility of the Goals: Understanding and expressing the Goals' interconnectedness is a hallmark of the Lab's activities. For example, the Lab hosts the 'So What?' speaker series to explore and explain the interrelations of the Goals as they are implemented in the real world. Each presentation demonstrates that progress on one Goal depends on action on another. The series represents a new holistic approach based on collaboration.

The need for partnerships: The SDG Lab co-created the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem, a network open to the UN family, NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. This initiative is working to explore and act on the ideas generated at summits like the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, with the aim of accelerating the implementation of the Goals by a diverse set of actors.

In its first year of existence, the Lab has already surpassed its own expectations. Going forward, it will focus on the practical implementation of the Goals, with an emphasis on results at the local and country level – a recognition that, as we work to achieve the Goals, it will be results on the ground, not processes, that will determine success.



The Informal Feedback Meeting on the 2017 High-level Political Forum, sponsored by the SDG Lab, was held for Member States and other interested stakeholders on 24 October at the Palais des Nations. (UN Photo: François Vioud)

“The connection established via the SDG Lab has been very useful in the Millennium Institute’s programming efforts and in developing relationships with Governments. We’re about to conclude a project agreement with Nigeria, and are developing projects with other countries, among them Gambia, Sierra Leone and Zambia. The connection has also strengthened our relationship with UNITAR, and though less directly, has helped to increase our visibility within other UN agencies.”

– Adedoyin Onasanya, Millennium Institute

CONNECT WITH US

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[@SDGLab](https://twitter.com/SDGLab)



UN Photo: François Vioud

SUPERSTARS AND ROBOTS SHARE THEIR STORIES IN THE SDG STUDIO GENEVA

In 2016, Ban Ki-moon, then Secretary-General, stated that the Sustainable Development Goals needed to be communicated to at least two billion people by the end of 2017.

With 33 short films under its belt, the SDG Studio Geneva did its part in working towards this goal, and in the process proved its value as a professional multimedia communications outlet for UN agencies and partners working on social development issues. The studio has demonstrated the importance of trying something new, reaching 140,000 combined views of its videos on Facebook and YouTube.

The studio's 2017 blockbuster starred Brazilian football superstar Neymar Jr., the Handicap International Ambassador, who highlighted Sustainable Development Goal 10, the need for reduced inequalities, in particular among child amputees. To date, his video message has reached more than 870,000 people on Facebook.

Another hit this year was a conversation with a stunningly impressive humanoid robot, Sophia, and her creator, David Hanson. Sophia was optimistic that artificial intelligence can promote positive change around Sustainable Development Goal 9: industry, innovation, and infrastructure. It might be possible to make robots more ethical than people, Sophia maintained, before adding that humans and smart machines could look forward to a "good partnership" in the future.

Two videos about the Syrian peace process highlighted Sustainable Development Goal 5: gender equality. In one, Rajaa Altalli of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board, which meets regularly with the UN Special Envoy for Syria, explained that the war-torn country's women are role models who have been working non-stop to help millions of vulnerable people. In another, UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura explained why he believes including the views of women is so important to the peace process that he is spearheading in Geneva.

The studio also went mobile this year as a "pop-up" Internet-ready space for UN Geneva Open Day.

The studio's films are promoted on social media and can be viewed any time on Facebook and YouTube. Each film is screened at UN Geneva, at UN Headquarters and on a New York City TV channel. The studio's films exemplify how UN Geneva is keeping its work and the Sustainable Development Goals relevant and in the public eye.



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Director-General Michael Møller in the SDG Studio (UN Photo)

70 YEARS OF UN KNOWLEDGE – NOW FREE AND ONLINE

In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, ensure prosperity for all and protect our fragile planet. These goals represent our common road map to a safer and more sustainable future. Reaching these ambitious goals requires fresh thinking and bold innovation. It also depends on a new approach to institutional knowledge – not as something to be hoarded, but as something to be shared globally.

The UN Library Geneva has lived up to this challenge in 2017 by unveiling its SDG Research Guide. This groundbreaking platform mobilizes the unprecedented amount of knowledge accumulated by the UN System over more than seventy years and is presented in an online format organized by global goal. Readily accessible to those working on the front lines of the implementation of the goals, this research guide is the first of its kind. Going forward, the Library will continue to update the SDG Research Guide and study new ways to support countries in implementing the global goals.

Multilingualism is woven tightly into the fabric of the United Nations because it promotes and protects diversity and brings a multitude of perspectives to our work.

International Mother Language Day

UN Geneva mirrors the world's linguistic diversity. At least 69 mother tongues are spoken by UNOG staff, who, taken together, speak 90 languages. International Mother Language Day, celebrated on 21 February, tapped into this in-house richness with the unveiling of a video featuring some of these mother tongues.

UN Geneva also marked the day with the official inauguration of the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism, a photographic exhibition, information stands, games, quizzes, calligraphy, and tables for conversation in the United Nations official languages. A Library Talk revealed the power of languages in diplomacy: in bridging cultures, in building empathy, cooperation and partnerships, and in peacekeeping.

Language Days at the Palais des Nations

The United Nations works principally in six official languages. It launched Language Days in 2010 to support multilingualism and increase knowledge about each of the languages among the UN community. The 2017 celebrations at the Palais des Nations brought delegates and UN staff together to share their rich linguistic heritage with their colleagues. Language Days also strengthen understanding of the cultures that the languages spring from, and about the interplay between the two.

Arabic Language Day, on 18 December, marks the day in 1973 on which Arabic became an official and working language of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. Translators recited works by Tunisian poet Mohamed Saghir Ouled Ahmed and performed a lute accompaniment. The Arabic language, and its reach, its future and its growing number of students around the world, was at the heart of an absorbing round-table

Lute improvisation by Ezzeddine Louati
(Photo: Soukaina Louati)



discussion. Artworks, some featuring Arabic calligraphy, were exhibited.

Chinese Language Day is held annually on 20 April. The day honours Cangjie (倉頡) for his invention of Chinese characters five millennia ago, whereupon Heaven blessed the Earth and the Chinese people with millet raining from the sky, and prosperity, marking the beginning of the long and great Chinese civilization and of Chinese historical chronicles. Spectacular photographs and paintings were on display this year in the “Beautiful China, Picturesque Zhejiang” exhibition. There were demonstrations of calligraphy and fan-painting, and a tea ceremony.

English Language Day is on 23 April, the birthday of William Shakespeare. The activities this year included a screening of the film *Shakespeare in Love*, afternoon tea and cakes, and a quiz and games showcasing the English language.

French Language Day falls on 20 March, coinciding with the International Day of la Francophonie. A concert featuring musicians Ted Beaubrun, Marc Aymon, Licia Chery, Manal Samaan, and the Mesob Band, and cartoonist Hani Abbas, brought emotion, raw and refined, to the evening’s theme of experiencing our diversity together.

Russian Language Day is observed on 6 June, the date on which the poet, novelist and playwright Aleksandr Pushkin was born in 1799. Alexey Fateev and Lyubov Rudenko performed works from the Russian “romance”



Zhang Liangsheng demonstrating Chinese calligraphy
(UN Photo: UN Geneva Cultural Activities Programme)

genre – sung poetry with hints of Gypsy influence, and an exhibition of paintings by Tatiana Godovalnikova and etchings by Vitaly Gubarev was opened.

This year’s activities for Spanish Language Day included a performance of Spanish-language poetry and music, with narrator Coralia Rodríguez and musicians Amanda Cepero, Narciso Saúl, Gaëlle Poirier and Orland Oliva. A literary debate took place, on reliving and retelling as a source of literary inspiration, with the writer José María Conget, the poet María Leach and the playwright Borja Ortiz de Gondra, and with the journalist Manuel Bear as moderator. And work by Argentinian artist Eugenia Susel were staged in an exhibition entitled “A Smile for Human Rights”.

* When did the number of speakers of English as a second language exceed the number of native speakers for the first time?

- A.** 1920s **B.** 1950s **C.** 1980s **D.** 1990s

* Which word is NOT of Arabic origin?

- A.** coffee **B.** giraffe **C.** rice **D.** ghoul

* Answers: B; C.



Haitian Swiss musician Licia Chery (UN Photo: UN Geneva Cultural Activities Programme)



Alexey Fateev performing works of the Russian "romance" genre (UN Photo: UN Geneva Cultural Activities Programme)

OPEN DAY: SHARING THE PALAIS WITH THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

The United Nations Office at Geneva opened its doors to the public on Saturday, 7 October, offering over 14,000 visitors a chance to explore the inner workings of the United Nations and its partners. The day featured a series of activities demonstrating the UN's work to resolve crises around the world and shape a better future for humanity. These included a virtual earthquake in front of the Palais des Nations and a session on reducing the impact from such disasters, and interactive booths giving facts on landmine removal and on the dangers posed by chemical and biological weapons. Switzerland, the host country, was the special guest, as it celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of its 2002 accession to the United Nations.

The people of International Geneva

In the Open Day environment, the public were able to interact with about 500 staff members of the United Nations, permanent missions and partner organizations. These exchanges were an opportunity for the public to learn what it is like to work in International Geneva. There were speed meetings – three-minute face-to-face meetings between visitors and staff members – and special sessions on the Palais des Nations renovations and the Strategic Heritage Plan. Many UN personalities took part in Open Day, among them the Director-General of UN Geneva, Michael Møller, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.

Volunteers at Open Day (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



A close-up of the Sustainable Development Goals

Open Day showcased the Sustainable Development Goals. To make the Global Goals more tangible and stress that everyone has a role to play in their implementation, a series of cube-shaped booths had been built, each one focusing on a different goal and set up in a different part of the Palais des Nations or the surrounding park. Going from one to the next meant taking a journey through the Global Goals. A highlight was the Sustainable Development Goals Media Cube, hosted by UNTV Geneva, which featured an all-day live programme on which people shared stories about the Global Goals. In the Your Idea Counts campaign, visitors were encouraged to share their own ideas about how to tackle global challenges.

Children

Many of the activities were designed with families in mind and especially the youngest members. Children plotted their course around the Sustainable Development Goals cubes, collected memory cards from all the cubes and were invited to share their vision of the future in the Media Cube. They also took part in a book reading of Fairy Tales for a Fairer World, a compilation of well-known children's stories with a Sustainable Development Goals twist.



Visitors learn about Sustainable Development Goal 4, on quality education, in an SDG cube. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



A young visitor "jumps into the future" at an interactive exhibit. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

Personal engagement

Director-General Michael Møller was delighted with the turnout:

“I never get bored of seeing the enthralled faces of visitors who discover this magnificent Palais des Nations, of talking to them and discovering that they care a great deal about the work of the United Nations. Many among them do not hesitate to suggest ideas on how to improve the fate of the world, and that is the kind of personal engagement we need to foster mutual respect and understanding.”



Partnerships

Open Day was made possible thanks to a public-private partnership between UN Geneva and the Fondation pour Genève. UN Geneva also received substantial financial and in-kind support from Switzerland, the Republic and Canton of Geneva, the City of Geneva, the Loterie Romande, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and a private Geneva-based foundation. The event would not have been possible without the support of 250 volunteers, who welcomed over 14,000 guests and made sure that Open Day ran smoothly and safely.

Visitors of all ages line up at the book signing for Fairy Tales for a Fairer World. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Visitors discover culinary and cultural traditions from around the world. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Language staff sharing their experiences of working at the UN (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Thomas Hornsberger, from the UN Library Geneva, gives a bookbinding demonstration during Open Day (UN Photo)

Safety and security

Open Day presented a unique challenge for the Security and Safety Service against the backdrop of tensions arising from extremist terrorist attacks in neighbouring European states. All too often, security is perceived as an inhibiting force. Therefore, the goal on Open Day, besides providing a safe and secure environment, was to enable visitors to enjoy the spectacular grounds of the Palais des Nations, free from overcrowding and other safety hazards.

During the event, the security team managed the screening and reception of over 14,000 visitors, 250 volunteers and a number of VIPs. The team oversaw the safety of the booths on the grounds and worked tirelessly to ensure that all visitors had a positive and memorable experience.



UN Photo



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

What goes on behind the Nations Gate? In an effort to bring the work of the United Nations to the Geneva community, the Information Service organized a number of events that encouraged participants to learn about and get engaged in the world-changing work of the Organization.

The Together campaign aims to counter the rise of xenophobia and discrimination, and to protect the safety and dignity of migrants and refugees. The Service hosted several Together events this year, including a charity concert. The campaign was also prominently featured in a training run for over 2,000 runners in Ariana Park, organized by UN Geneva in preparation for the city's popular Escalade race.

Geneva Mix & Mash networking events bring together people from all over International Geneva to mingle over UN topics and a glass of wine. This year's five gatherings

covered women's rights, the Sustainable Development Goals, the environment, ageing, and information and communication technologies.

Ciné-ONU Geneva celebrated its fourth year in 2017. This Information Service initiative uses film to tell powerful stories of global importance. Ciné-ONU screened eight films this year, with total attendance exceeding 1,500. The films highlighted issues such as tolerance in the wake of a deadly terrorist attack, black women's behind-the-scenes role in helping a country's space program, reconciliation in the aftermath of genocide and war, the impact of 8 million tons of plastic littering the world's oceans, and living with HIV.

At Open Day, visitors learned about what the work of the UN means for everyone on the planet, while many more tuned in to the live eight-hour broadcast of the event on UN Web TV and Facebook Live.

STRENGTHENING TIES WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

CIVIL SOCIETY AND UN GENEVA

Civil society has been actively engaged with the UN since its inception, strengthening and promoting the UN Charter's three pillars: peace and security, human rights, and development. Civil society is a driver of change. It brings a long list of vital issues, as well as viable solutions, to the UN multilateral table. It is civil society actors and non-governmental organizations that mobilize to get UN organs to pass resolutions on a range of issues, including disarmament, peacebuilding, development, human rights and the environment. It is civil society that then pushes for action on those resolutions on the ground, right where change is needed, and then brings back the reality from the ground to the meeting room.

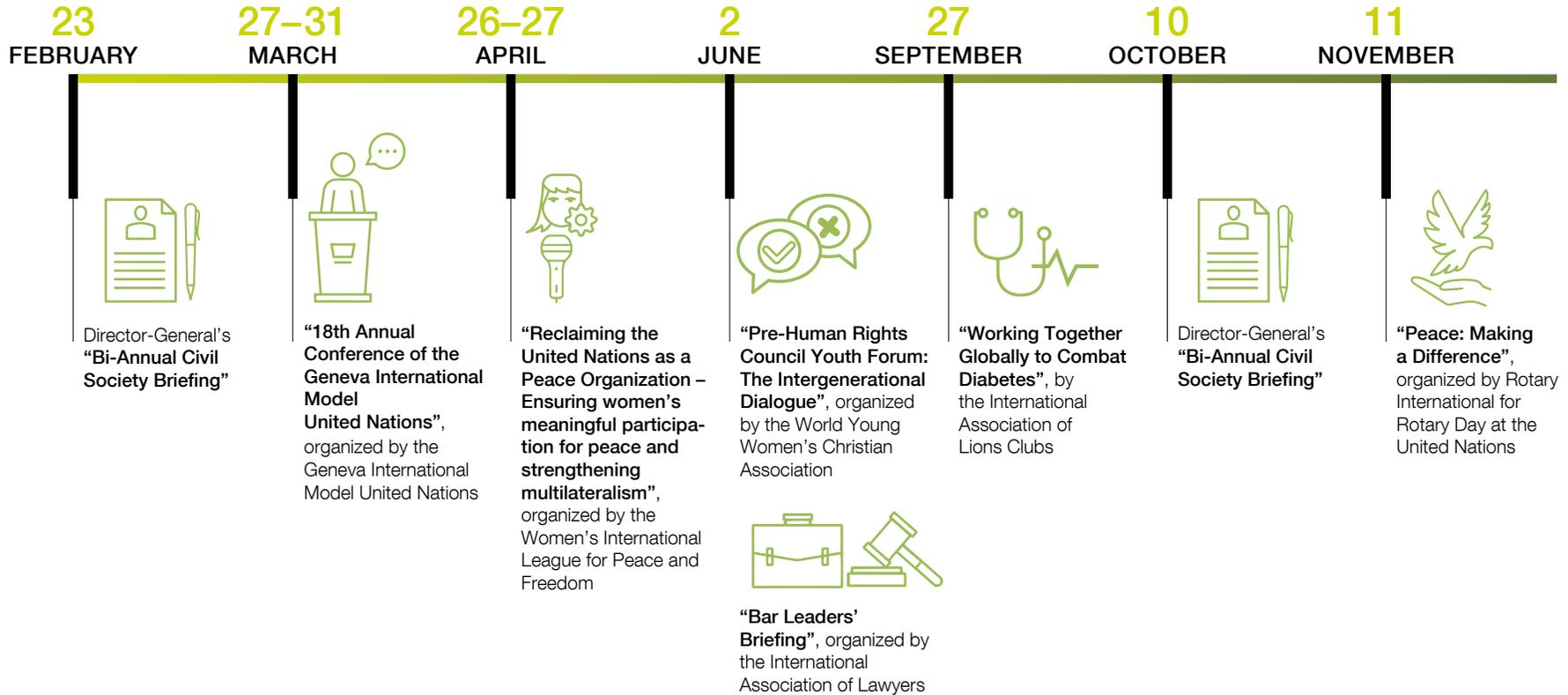
The UN system relies on the expertise and active involvement of civil society actors at all levels. The mutually beneficial relationship between the UN and civil society is the product of collaboration in the field and is cemented in the exchange of lessons learned and best practices. Geneva – home to hundreds of NGOs – plays a vital role in nurturing this relationship, which keeps growing in substance and in numbers. In 2017, 981 NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were accredited to UN Geneva, 13.5% more than the previous year. In total, 4,875 NGO representatives had access to the Palais des Nations to participate in events in 2017, a 14% increase over 2016.

To sustain the ties that bind the UN with NGOs, the UN Geneva Director-General meets regularly with NGO and civil society representatives and holds dialogues twice a year with the Geneva NGO community on the UN agenda and priorities. NGO engagement in these dialogues has soared in recent years: 300 NGO representatives took part in 2017, four times as many as in 2014. The Secretary-General's reform agenda and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals were discussed at both meetings in 2017.

With the support of the NGO Liaison Unit, NGOs brought their expertise to the Palais des Nations in 2017, organizing nearly 70 conferences, panel discussions, seminars and workshops, most of which discussed the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Unit also organized three thematic briefings specifically for NGOs: on reprisals against those who engage with the UN system on human rights, on the Scale Up Nutrition movement and on financing for development.

Timeline of selected NGO events and briefings at the Palais des Nations

2017



DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S MISSIONS IN 2017

United States
of America

Seventy-second Session of the General Assembly
New York, United States

Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force
of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,
Article XIV Session
New York, United States

Sustainable Development Solutions Network
Leadership Council Meeting
New York, United States

Warwick Congress Conference
Coventry, United Kingdom

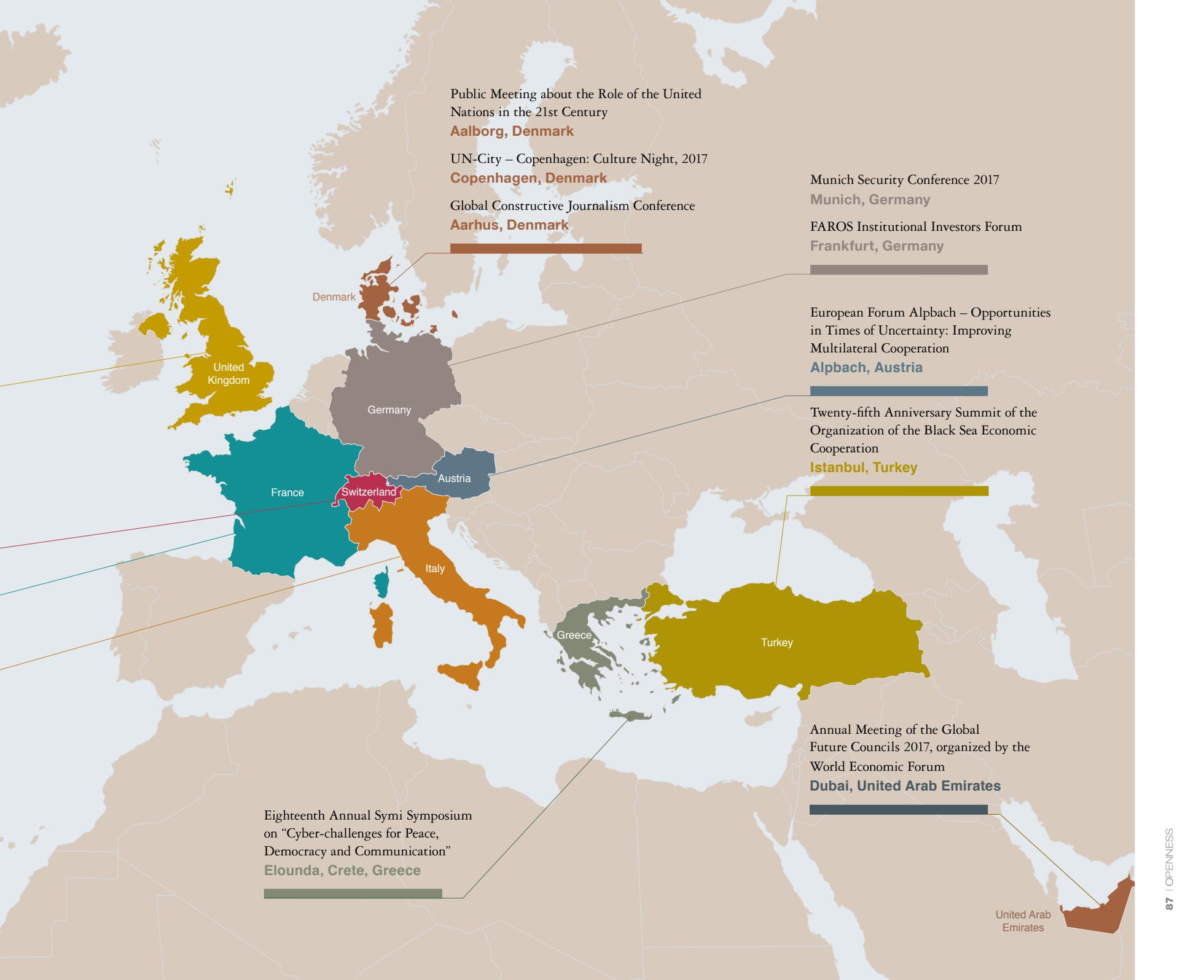
Salesforce "Fortune CEO Series" event
London, United Kingdom

World Economic Forum
Davos, Switzerland

2017 Seminar for Special and Personal
Representatives, Envoys and Advisers
of the UN Secretary-General
Mont-Pèlerin, Switzerland

Ahimsa Forum 2017
Veyrier-du-Lac, France

Global Sustainability Forum
Rome, Italy



Public Meeting about the Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century
Aalborg, Denmark

UN-City – Copenhagen: Culture Night, 2017
Copenhagen, Denmark

Global Constructive Journalism Conference
Aarhus, Denmark

Munich Security Conference 2017
Munich, Germany

FAROS Institutional Investors Forum
Frankfurt, Germany

European Forum Alpbach – Opportunities in Times of Uncertainty: Improving Multilateral Cooperation
Alpbach, Austria

Twenty-fifth Anniversary Summit of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation
Istanbul, Turkey

Annual Meeting of the Global Future Councils 2017, organized by the World Economic Forum
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Eighteenth Annual Sympo Symposium on “Cyber-challenges for Peace, Democracy and Communication”
Elounda, Crete, Greece

BE OUR GUEST



Peacocks are a special attraction on some guided tours or while visiting the Palais des Nations. (UN Photo: Emmanuel Hungrecker)

2017 was an eventful year for the Visitors' Service, which offered 4,851 guided tours to 121,895 people from 45 countries.

The UN Geneva Visitors' Service set a new record in 2017, welcoming more people than ever to the Palais des Nations. The number of visitors has been steadily rising for years, and increased by almost 10% from 2016, to 121,895 people.

It was heartening to see that students made up more than 80% of the group tours. They were eager to learn about the history, work and future of the UN. One group of students from Lycée Pareto in Geneva even had the opportunity to become tour guides themselves, as part of a special project showcasing Italian art at the Palais des Nations.

In 2017, a new highlight was added to the tour. Visitors can now see one of the most valuable artworks in the UN Geneva collection, a four-part mural painting by French painter Ker-Xavier Roussel, which used to adorn the walls of the iconic Assembly Hall.

The Service also supports Member States. This year, for example, a delegation from the Czech Republic was given a special tour of the Czech and Slovak Room, an art deco-style room used for high-level visits and other protocol functions. Visiting dignitaries, among them Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, also took the time to tour the Palais des Nations.

During Open Day, tour guides gave compelling presentations on the Council Chamber to more than 6,500 visitors. One of the oldest rooms of the Palais des Nations, the Chamber hosted the negotiations to end the Gulf War, hosted several special sessions of the Security Council, and continues to accommodate the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament.

If you are interested in booking a tour, go to www.unog.ch/visitorservice or send an email to visit-gva@un.org.

2017 visitor demographics

Schoolchildren	67.4%
University students	14.3%
Older persons	1.2%
Others	17.1%

2017 visitors by country

Switzerland	27.5%
France	17.3%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	14.2%
Italy	8.9%
Germany	5.9%
United States of America	4.3%
Spain	3.4%
China	3.4%
Portugal	1.3%
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey	13.7%



Guests enjoy a culinary festival, part of the Nowruz celebration. (UN Photo)

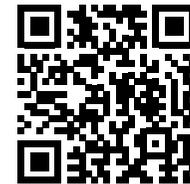
What do art exhibitions, film festivals and fashion shows have to do with diplomacy? In truth, everything, because in today's world, nearly every major issue is global in scale and requires a collective response. This collaboration requires us to listen to one another and to appreciate our diversity as a strength. By facilitating the exchange of ideas between peoples and cultures, cultural diplomacy fosters the empathy and understanding that are the cornerstones of lasting partnerships.

As a shared space for humanity, the Palais des Nations is a vital stage for this exchange, making it possible for Member States and international organizations to present vibrant cultures and traditions to the international community, visitors and UN staff. In 2017, the Cultural Activities Programme at the UN Library Geneva facilitated 108 cultural activities, special events, art donation ceremonies and side events for 68 Member States and 30 international organizations. The events reached a combined audience of around 25,000 people.

Culture has been used for centuries as a political instrument, whether to forge relationships and understanding or to assert power. The increasing number of cultural activities taking place at the Palais des Nations confirms that culture is still very much alive today, and has the power to strengthen links across borders and entire continents.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 108 CULTURAL EVENTS

To see the complete list of 2017 cultural events, visit www.unog.ch/culturalactivities or scan the QR code.



2017 Cultural Events



Guests view the large-scale sculptures of animals and totems from the indigenous Australian communities of the Cape York Peninsula. (UN Photo: Federica Perrini)

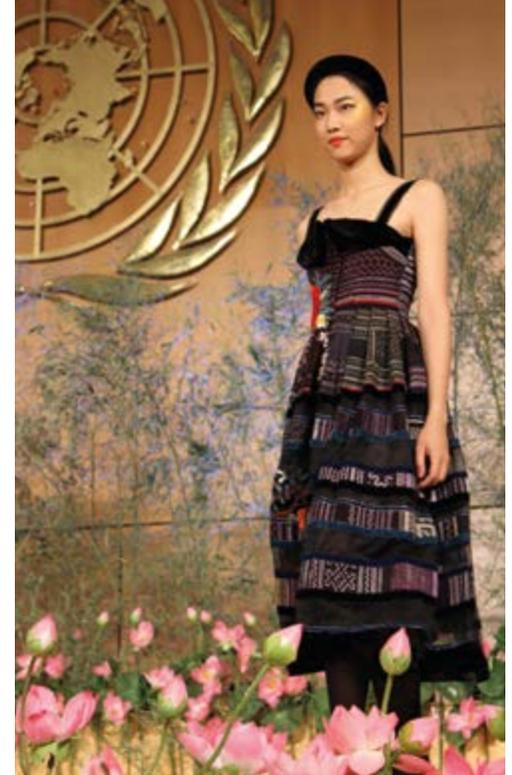


Appearance by the China Disabled People's Performing Art Troupe (UN Photo)





A visitor documents one of the works at the Pan-African exhibition. (UN Photo)



A fashion show celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Viet Nam's membership in the United Nations and the seventy-second anniversary of the country's National Day (UN Photo)



Live music to celebrate International Day of la Francophonie (UN Photo)

HACKING THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Hacking the League of Nations

Where do you think hackers gather? In an Internet café? A dimly lit basement? A state-of-the-art facility?

What about a library? In May 2017, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva co-hosted the Geneva Open Libraries Hackathon, part of its efforts to find innovative ways of broadening access to the rich data found in the League of Nations Archives. A hackathon brings together computer programmers, information technology specialists and subject-matter experts to collaborate on software projects.

The Geneva Open Libraries Hackathon explored how web and mobile apps could help researchers access library, archival and other cultural data. The hackers worked with the League of Nations Photo Archive, which houses over a thousand photographs documenting the activities of the predecessor to the United Nations. While most of these photographs had been digitized and made available online in 2001, they lacked detailed metadata and were difficult to use for research purposes.

The challenge for the team was to make it easier for researchers and students to extract information from the Photo Archive. So the team elected to crowdsource the identities of individuals in the photographs by creating an automatic facial recognition algorithm and an online platform for people to validate the identities and contribute metadata. In September the hackers realized that the large amount of data on Wikidata could contribute to the project, and they decided to focus on connecting the two platforms. Once the hackathon was over, the team made its results and the corresponding code for the prototype publicly available, enabling anyone to take part in the “hacking” of the League of Nations.

The same team travelled to the University of Lausanne in September to take part in the third Swiss Open Cultural Data Hackathon, during which archivists and hackers met to investigate the possibilities offered by open and networked cultural data.

The hacking is on!

COLLABORATIVE
FACE RECOGNITION & PICTURE ANNOTATION

FACE DETECTION > CLASSIFICATION > IDENTIFICATION > COLLABORATION

IDENTIFICATION: Users can identify faces in the photos and add metadata.

COLLABORATION: Users can collaborate on identifying faces and adding metadata.

FACE DETECTION: The system automatically detects faces in the photos.

CLASSIFICATION: The system automatically classifies faces into groups.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Geneva Open Libraries

EPITECH

Courtesy of Martin Grandjean (University of Lausanne)

SHARING THE RICHNESS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ARCHIVES

The Palais des Nations is the custodian of a priceless treasure: the archive of the League of Nations. At first glance, the word “archive” conjures up dusty shelves and ageing papers. But when it comes to this archive, the old adage rings true: knowledge is power. The more than 15 million pages in the League of Nations Archives document humanity’s first attempt at forging a multilateral organization to preserve global peace, foster development and protect human rights. Its shelves chronicle the successes and failures of an organization that faced many of the same challenges facing today’s leaders. The United Nations continues to learn from the legacy of its predecessor, drawing lessons and inspiration from the words of the luminaries and visionary legal scholars of the interwar period. Recognizing its value, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed the League of Nations Archives on the Memory of the World register in 2009.

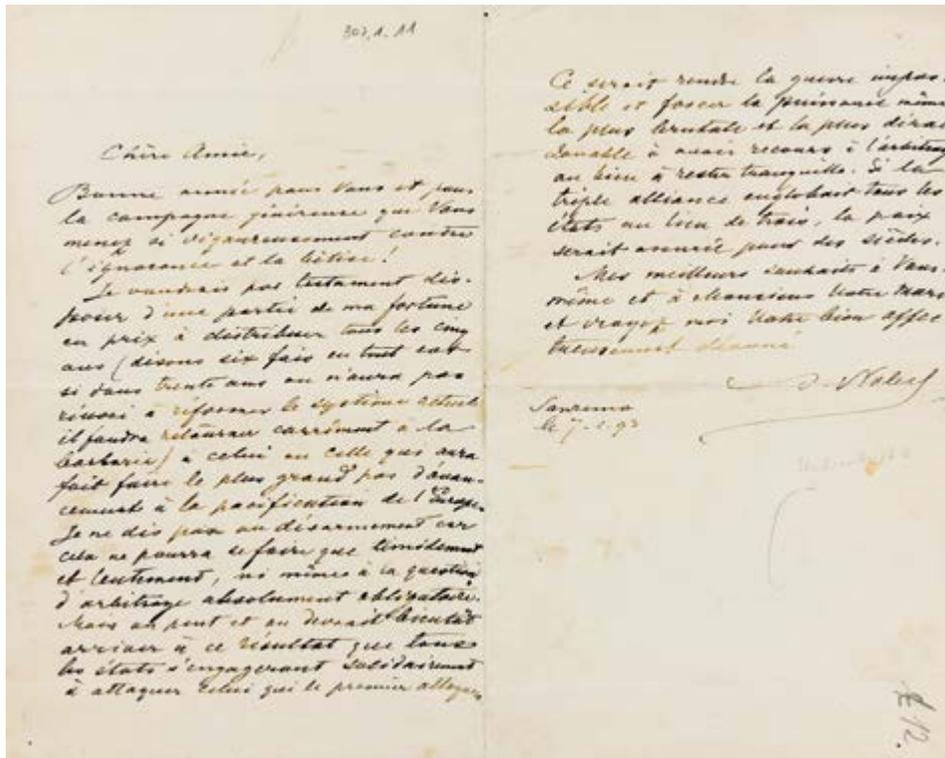
In 2017, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva embarked on an ambitious, five-year project to digitize the League of Nations Archives. The initiative is vital for two reasons. First, it will give more inclusive access to a unique repository of knowledge for all of humanity. In this digital age, libraries must adapt to new technologies to ensure that the information they hold is accessible to the largest number of people. Digitization not only makes information easier to find, it makes it accessible to students and researchers, regardless of geographic barriers. Second, digitization will preserve this invaluable resource for posterity.

With this project, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva remains firmly at the forefront of efforts to digitize archives, harnessing innovative technology to mobilize knowledge and working to preserve evocative documentation from a unique time in recent history. The project is made possible by a generous donation from a private Swiss foundation.

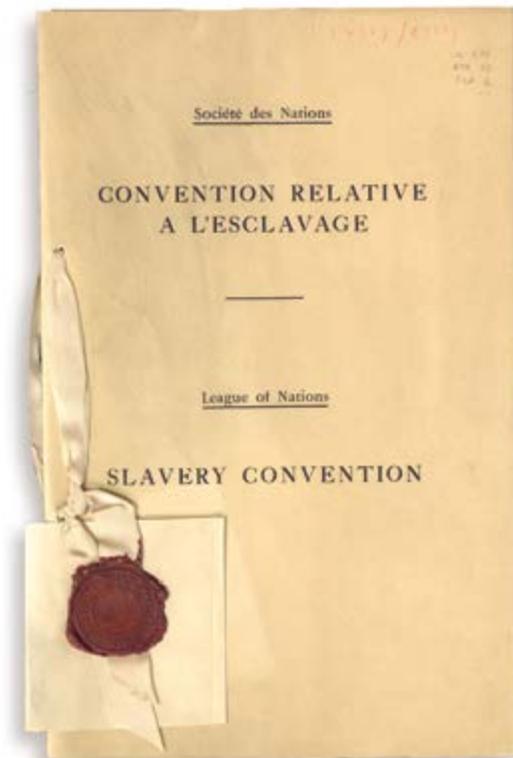


Nansen passport for refugees (United Nations Archives at Geneva)

Letter from Alfred Nobel to Bertha von Suttner creating the Nobel Peace Prize (United Nations Archives at Geneva)



Slavery Convention, of 1926 (United Nations Archives at Geneva)



DIGITIZATION PROJECT TIMELINE Pre-digitization

Scanning

Processing

End user access

2017

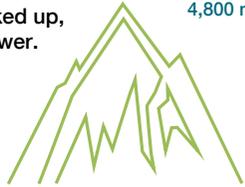
15 MILLION
PAGES

Total content of the League
of Nations Archives



MONT BLANC 4,800 m

If these pages were stacked up,
they would create a 3,000-metre-tall tower.



4,800 m

LEAGUE OF NATIONS
ARCHIVES 3,000 m

3,000 m



SOME FAMOUS NAMES found in the Archives,
who helped shape the League of Nations.



Albert
Einstein



Woodrow
Wilson



Marie
Curie



Thomas
Mann



2022



THE PALAIS DES NATIONS – THEN AND NOW

What if you could travel back in time to tour the Palais des Nations in the era of the League of Nations? The powerful photography exhibition, “Palais des Nations: The Way We Were”, which was unveiled during Open Day 2017, presents this unique opportunity.

Using a layering technique, local photographer Patrick Jacquet juxtaposes black and white photos from the early 1930s with their contemporary colour equivalents. The photographs are taken from the same angle, with the same framing, but are separated by decades of history.

The exhibition can be seen on the UN Geneva Flickr account or explored in an interactive online format.

Scan the QR code to take a peek at the interactive photos.



UN Photo: Patrick Jacquet

When the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities convened in the recently renovated conference room 17, a team from across UN Geneva used assistive technology to open the meetings to all.

The World Health Organization estimates that one in seven people worldwide lives with some form of disability. Most experts on the 18-member Committee have one or more of the four impairments listed in article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: physical, mental, intellectual or sensory. With half of the Committee elected every other year, UN Geneva must regularly refocus to address new experts' needs. "We want to be as flexible as possible," said conference affairs officer Riin Koppel, "and accessible to the outside world as well."

Room 17 proved best suited to this plan, explained electronic engineering technician Emanuele Giangiolami: "We have a meeting room with the maximum flexibility possible, because each meeting is completely different."

Room 17 has seven robotic cameras that simultaneously capture a panorama of the meeting, and close-ups of individual speakers and sign language interpreters. These feeds are shown above the dais on a 14-square-metre LED display – the largest screen in any UN building – alongside text under discussion and real-time captions. Remote captioning for the Committee's sessions was provided this year in English, French, Russian and Spanish, with the English captions also available on a UN Web TV stream.

The accessibility features in room 17 also include a 12-inch screen at each seat, which accommodates people with poor vision, and the interpretation booths have instructions in Braille to help blind interpreters handle their workflow.

Spoken interpretation in the working languages of the Committee was augmented with International Sign and the national sign language of each country under review. This addition allowed for interaction and discussion in real time, explained Rebecca Edgington, chief of the English Interpretation Section and the Interpretation Service's focal point for sign language interpretation. The UN Web TV stream included International Sign. UN Geneva plans to show interpretation in both sign languages in the future.

Ms. Edgington said she looked forward to assistive technologies widening the accessibility of more meetings. "You ask a deaf person if they're disabled, and they'll say, 'No, I have another mother tongue. I'm not disabled in any way.'" Plans to equip room 20 and additional meeting rooms with new microphone, camera and LED display technology will move this process forward.

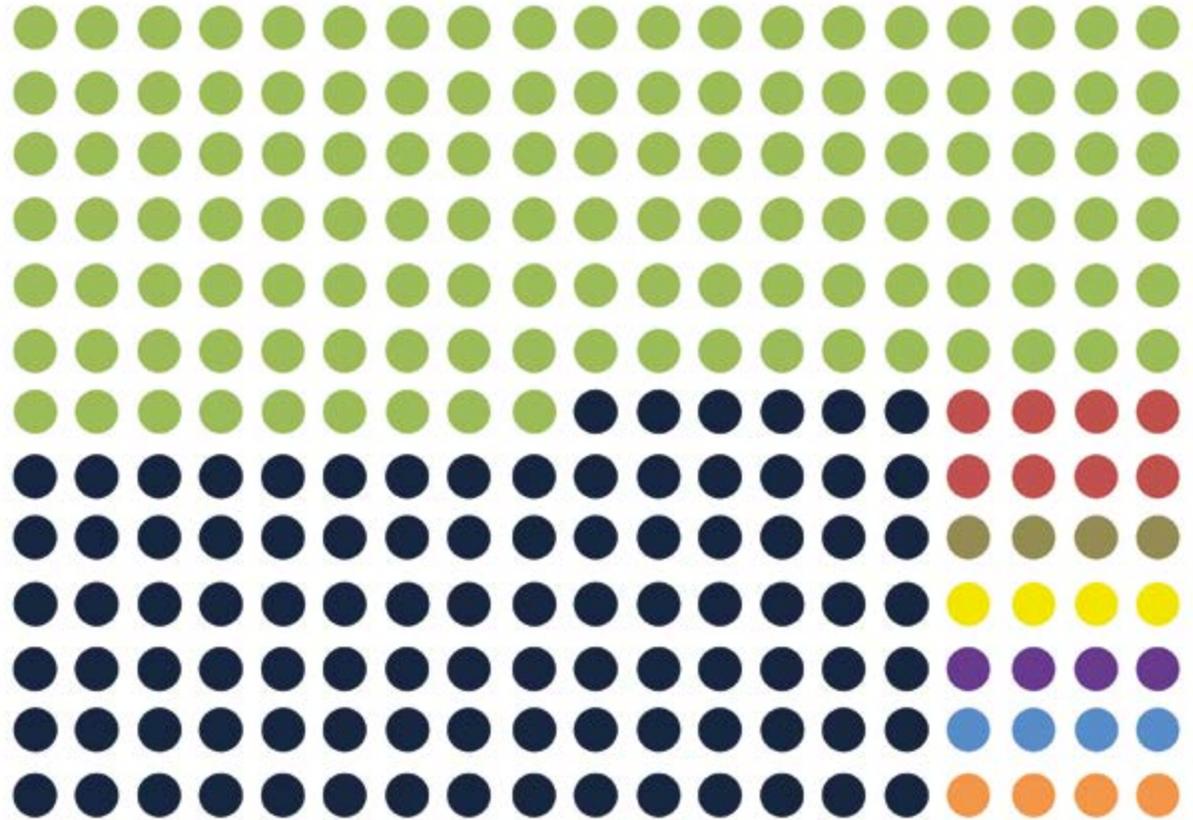
Jorge Araya, secretary of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, sees accessibility concerns at the Committee's sessions as part of a larger picture: "We are not talking about making privileges for people with disabilities. We are working to ensure that no one is left behind, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals."

INCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGY OPENS MEETINGS TO ALL

2017

247 working days of sign language interpretation

- 123 International Sign
- 96 Russian Sign Language
- 8 American Sign Language (Canada)
- 4 Honduran Sign Language
- 4 Levantine Arabic Sign Language (Jordan)
- 4 Moroccan Sign Language
- 4 Panamanian Sign Language
- 4 British Sign Language





Sign language interpretation during the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)

FUTURE

The United Nations was created 72 years ago, in 1945. Gathering as the embers left by the most destructive conflict in human history still burned brightly, its founders pledged “never again”. As they penned their signatures on the UN Charter, they envisioned an organization that would preserve peace, defend human rights and promote social progress. Today, we are in that generation’s debt. Their ideals are as inspiring as ever, but preserving their legacy is a struggle, one passed down to every succeeding generation. To make sure their creation endures, the UN must keep up with changing times. To that end, UN Geneva is implementing a wide range of reforms so it may remain a good steward for the hopes vested in it by those we serve. UN Geneva is also investing in its assets, chief among which is the Palais des Nations. Finally, UN Geneva is engaging with young people, to whom we will someday pass the legacy of 1945.

MARCHING TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

*“We must be nimble and effective,
flexible and efficient.”*

– Secretary-General António Guterres

To live up to the hopes placed in the UN by the peoples of the world, the Organization must be a good steward of its resources, constantly striving to be as effective, flexible and efficient as possible. To that end, the Human Resources Management Service and the Financial Resources Management Service have implemented a series of ambitious reforms in recent years, with an emphasis on self-service. The International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the new enterprise resource planning system known as Umoja are two high-profile examples. These platforms reduce physical paperwork, cut down on administrative costs and processing delays, and facilitate archiving.

In 2017, the UN Staff Mutual Insurance Society unveiled an online claims portal. This one-stop shop makes it possible for staff to electronically submit medical insurance claims, verify personal details and manage their accounts. With the Society processing some 90,000 claims per year for some 26,000 individuals in over 20 UN system entities, the e-claims portal will cut down on expensive physical storage and reduce the environmental impact associated with paper.



Did you know?

UN Geneva processes payroll for **6,500 staff** working in the UN system

UN Geneva human resources administers **4,200 staff** in **90 countries**

UN Geneva financial resources processes **28,000 payments** per month, on average

30,000 users from **123 different countries** accessed the insurance claims portal in 2017

Every individual holds a perception about the United Nations. Many of these perceptions are formed by the mass media, which relays the world's problems and crises every day: people displaced by wars from their communities and countries, deaths caused by outbreaks of disease, homes destroyed by natural disasters. Very rarely does it mention the solutions to these problems or the behind-the-scenes work already being undertaken. If the UN does make the news, it is often about the international community's inability to do something about the problems. Against this background, Director-General Michael Møller spotted an urgent need, and launched the Perception Change Project in early 2014 with a vision of changing the narrative about the United Nations and getting across the positive impact it has on every individual.

So what exactly is the Perception Change Project all about? Promoting change – a balanced perception of the United Nations. Changing understanding of social norms in order to change behaviour. And, in turn, changing the direction of our future to point to peace, rights and well-being – the three pillars that underpin UN Geneva's work.

The Perception Change Project bridges a gap between International Geneva (with its permanent missions, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, other institutions and private-sector actors) and the public, sending out frequent and consistent messages about the work done in Geneva for peace, rights and well-being. It shares some of the positive news and results achieved by the United Nations and the wider international system that would normally not reach the public. The Perception Change Project is not a newsroom. But through creative forms of communication, it aims to tell the whole story – from the challenges we face to the progress that the UN makes for all of humanity – in a manner that is easily understood by all, as seen in the Impact Infographics that the Project creates monthly.

To help people understand the impact of the work carried out in International Geneva, the Perception Change Project not only communicates the progress made, but

also where we need to be by 2030. The objective is the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals over the next 13 years. All decisions made across all sectors should encompass and be motivated by the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the Perception Change Project's work is guided by the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Perception Change Project helps to connect the public to global issues, so that crises and their solutions are clear to people even when they happen on the other side of the planet. So how do we change the way people view problems that are outside their own personal sphere, and get them to want to be part of the solutions? Through storytelling. Fairy Tales for a Fairer World, launched in December 2016, which explains the Sustainable Development Goals to youth, is one example of the Perception Change Project educating through creative literature.

Everyone has a responsibility, and the potential, to be part of change that matters. The Perception Change Project is a catalyst to help everyone become aware of that responsibility and potential.

PERCEPTION CHANGE PROJECT: A MORE COMPLETE PICTURE OF OUR WORK



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

INTERNATIONAL GENEVA FOR GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Over 38 million people die every year from non-communicable diseases (NCD).

Fast forward health with mobile technology and The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**-WHO's Be He@lthy, Be Mobile initiative encourages healthy living to tackle NCDs.



Research from the **UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)** shows it is more efficient to provide quality essential healthcare services as part of a package of universal, rights-based social policies, than to use a narrow approach targeting only parts of the population.



People are living longer. One in four people in Europe and North America will be over the age of 60 by 2030.

The **UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)** helps countries prepare and monitor strategies to adapt to demographic change and to realize the potential of living longer.

The aim is to create a society for all ages that leaves no one behind.



At least 400 million people globally lack access to one or more essential health services, and every year 150 million people suffer financial catastrophe because of out-of-pocket expenditure on health services.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** is working with countries to strengthen their health systems and make progress towards universal health coverage (UHC). UHC means that all individuals and communities receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. It includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.

UHC is the linchpin of the health-related SDGs, the one target that, if achieved, will help to deliver all the others by providing high-quality, people-centred services that are free at the point of delivery.



World Trade Organization (WTO) members recently amended trade rules to secure a legal pathway to ease access to affordable medicines.

It gives legal certainty that generic medicines can be exported at reasonable prices for countries with no pharmaceutical production capacity.



The cooling and proper conservation of medicines and vaccines is the first step towards better health. Electricity and electronics are essential aspects of healthcare and medical devices.



International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
The work of the IEC provides the technical foundation for all essential medical devices that are used in disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Countries working to reach Universal Healthcare Coverage draw on the expertise of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** to craft policies that improve and expand healthcare coverage.

The ILO helps countries develop and implement policies to protect workers from HIV infection and facilitate equal access to care, treatment, support and social protection for everyone who is living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.



The **UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)** has developed an e-course on the linkages between climate change and health.

The e-course was delivered to 300 people around the world during 2016. Through resource guides for advanced learning, it provides access to educational health material:

**55 publications,
36 factsheets,
and 13 online resources.**





Across the **Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement**, strong political and social leaders are taking responsibility for tackling malnutrition and bringing together all key stakeholders from health, social welfare, agriculture and education.

By 2030, we need to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and from pollution and contamination of air, water and soil.

The **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** develops International Standards that characterize the quality of air, water and soils. They help reduce the level of pollutants and contaminants in our environment, improving our health and well-being.



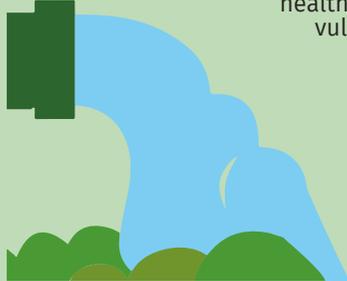
Gavi support has contributed to the immunisation of close to 580 million children.

Gavi has helped developing countries to prevent more than 8 million future deaths through its support to 10 life-saving vaccines.



10 life-saving vaccines

Ensuring WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) services are combined with safe treatment and disposal or use of wastewater amplifies health gains by reducing the burden of disease and associated loss of productivity and healthcare costs among vulnerable members of society.



UN Water

Since the early 90s, there has been an almost 50% decline in mortality rate of young children.

UNICEF works in 132 countries to strengthen health systems in the most deprived areas and to support the implementation of maternal, newborn and child health care plans.



Today more than 156 million children under age five are stunted or of too low weight for their age as a result of malnutrition. Food fortification is a cost-effective way to scale up nutrition interventions and reach the most vulnerable with the right nutrients needed to thrive.

In 2015–2016, the **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)** has reached 768 million people with one or more nutritious foods.

768 Million People
with nutritious food




Genève internationale
Peace, Rights and Well-Being



IMPACT INFOGRAPHIC BY THE PERCEPTION CHANGE PROJECT.
This infographic has been created with the contributions from PCP Partners Organizations participating in the PCP Impact Infographic series, and who reacted to PCP's request in crowd-sourcing information on the impact on the SDG3: the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), GAVI, International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), UNICEF, the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UN Water and the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD).

SYMBOL OF HARMONY TO BE RESTORED IN ARIANA PARK: THE CELESTIAL SPHERE RESTORATION PROJECT

“I considered the model of the Celestial Sphere superb – not only in originality of conception, but in delicacy of execution and in spirituality of meaning.”

– Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Council on Foreign Relations, 1935

The Celestial Sphere, an iconic symbol of the United Nations and of International Geneva, and a relic of the League of Nations era, will soon be restored to its original splendour. This intricate outdoor sculpture is one of the most frequently photographed and readily recognized symbols of the UN around the world. It has been on display in Ariana Park since its installation over 78 years ago, and now is in need of professional restoration and careful conservation. In 2017 UN Geneva launched the Celestial Sphere Restoration Project, supported by generously donated funds, with the goal of completely restoring the sculpture by September 2019, in time for a celebration of the centennial of the founding of the League of Nations.

The sculpture was unveiled in 1939 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the League of Nations and to honour the leadership of United States of America President Woodrow Wilson, who had received the 1919 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the creation of the League. Its full name is the “Celestial Sphere Woodrow Wilson Memorial”, and it was imagined, designed and scaled to be positioned in a place of prominence at the newly completed Palais des Nations, the headquarters of the League of Nations.

The Celestial Sphere can still be admired today in the heart of the Cour d’Honneur, commanding a magnificent view of Lake Geneva, with Mont Blanc beyond. “This makes a superb panorama,” wrote Arthur Sweetser, Director of the League of Nations Information Section, in a 1937 letter. “There is nothing to arrest the eye, no single object to take attention away from a great sweep in itself symbolical and suggestive of peace.”

Masterwork of Paul H.anship, a twentieth-century American sculptor associated with the Art Deco style who is best known for his gilded Prometheus sculpture over the ice-skating rink at Rockefeller Center in New York City, the Celestial Sphere is in the shape of an armillary sphere and is about four metres in diameter. It displays the heavens as seen from Earth, showing 64 constellations represented by classical mythological figures cast in gilded bronze, and includes 840 chromed stars positioned with astronomical accuracy.

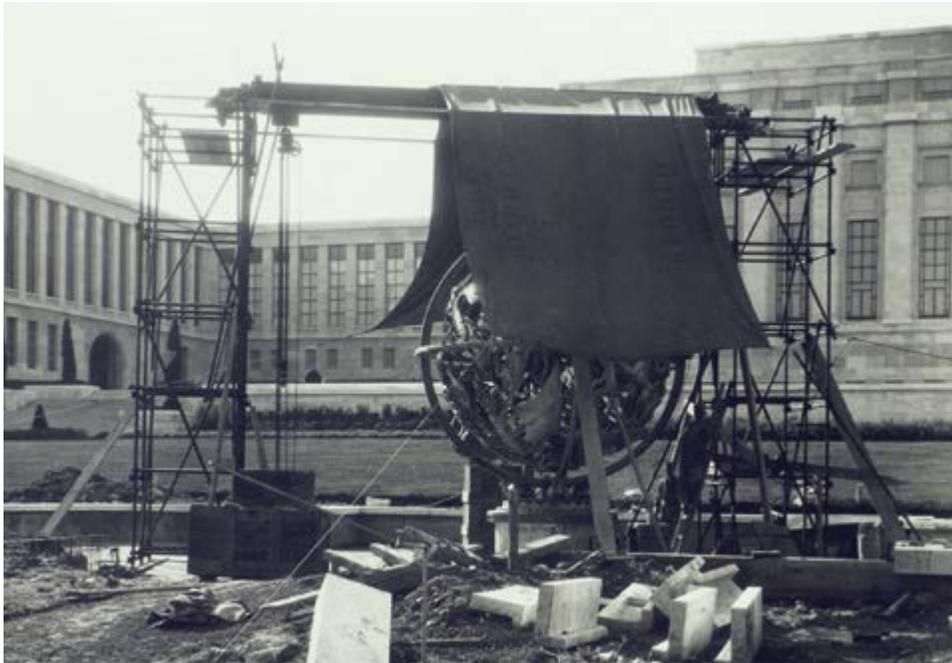
The restoration of the Celestial Sphere will include the complete repair and conservation of the sculpture itself, a return of the sculpture’s original ability to rotate in synchrony with the stars, installation of lighting and a redesign of the reflecting pool and its surrounding landscape.

The Celestial Sphere Restoration Project aims not only to repair the Sphere physically and to restore its original sparkle, but also to reaffirm the sculpture intellectually and spiritually as a symbol of humanity’s eternal quest for universal harmony and world peace. This vision that guided the founders of the League of Nations and inspired the Celestial Sphere will live on in the noble endeavours and undertakings of Member States, staff members and other stakeholders of the United Nations family and of International Geneva.



UN Photo: Violaine Martin

Installation of the Celestial Sphere, 1939 (UN Photo)



UN Photo



CREATIVE WAYS OF ENGAGING WITH YOUTH

Today's youth are tomorrow's decision makers. That is why the Perception Change Project in the Office of the Director-General has geared many of its initiatives towards engaging young people on issues that really matter.

The Project's first multicultural book for children, *Fairy Tales for a Fairer World*, adapts traditional stories from around the globe to highlight some of the challenges the world faces. Readers discover the Sustainable Development Goals and the work International Geneva does to achieve them. The book has been translated from English into Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish, and has been featured at several events: Geneva's Salon du livre, Expo 2017 Astana and Open Day at UN Geneva.

The Project also organizes monthly activities for students, together with the Eduki Foundation and Greycells, such as #KidsWannaKnow.

Held at UN Geneva, #KidsWannaKnow allows students to interview experts one-on-one about hot topics like women's rights, migration and protecting endangered plants and animals. One ambitious student from #KidsWannaKnow recognized Staffan de Mistura, Special Envoy for Syria, introduced himself, and asked if Mr. de Mistura could be interviewed at the next #KidsWannaKnow session. The interview was held in the SDG Studio Geneva and can be viewed on YouTube.

The Perception Change Project has seen students eagerly engage with the knowledge provided across different projects. An art student from Saxion University in the Netherlands volunteered to create a Sustainable Development Goals board game for kids using the characters and themes from *Fairy Tales for a Fairer World*. Students from Tsinghua University in China, who participated in the SDG Summer School, created a card game based on the Goals in collaboration with the University of Geneva and the Perception Change Project. A student from Union University in the United States of America illustrated the Project's second creative book, *After the Rain*, which will be released in 2018. Targeted at children ages 6 to 8, the book is about human migration.

The Perception Change Project continues to ask questions and seek new ways to involve and empower young people for a better future.



Phuc, a student from Saxion University in the Netherlands, came to UN Geneva to present his board game to the Perception Change Project. (UN Photo)



Students from SDG Summer School present and play their card game with the Perception Change Project. (UN Photo)



A student interviews Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura in the SDG Studio. (UN Photo)

CHILDREN “TAKE OVER” UN GENEVA ON WORLD CHILDREN’S DAY

In a world that can so often seem to be a hopeless place, we need children’s hope more than ever.

On 20 November, UN Geneva opened its doors to several hundred young people to further cement the commitment to youth participation and inclusion in the work of the UN. Guided by the expert hand of United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and volunteers from the youth association Step into Action, the youth visitors demonstrated their leadership in local action for a global impact through a fun and educational tour of the Palais des Nations, and engaged staff and senior leaders on the meaningful role of youth in creating a healthier, safer and more equal world by 2030.

Kids United, a popular French band and special guests at the event, together with the Geneva youth, discussed the role of young people in the 2030 Agenda with Director-General Michael Møller. The group also took over his office for the day, and were kind enough to return the “key” at the end of the event!

The objective of the day was not only to commemorate the anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, but also to catalyze and generate tangible commitments to youth engagement, which were displayed on the “Wall of Hope”. Mr. Møller committed to encouraging young people to actively support sustainable development, and to producing a first-ever “Annual Report for the Under 18”, an interactive publication enclosed in this annual report. An app version will be available for download on the UNOG Kiosk in the App Store or on Google Play.

Speaking with UN Radio about the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Kids United imagined the world in 2030. Gabriel said: “I would want to see every child go to school, to have every right that we are fighting for, no wars, no arguments, no conflicts, just peace and love, and to learn how to live with one another.”

The event ended with a lively closing ceremony, a powerful performance by Kids United, and an audience eager to change the world.



World Children's Day in the Assembly Hall (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



A participant gives back the “key” to the office of the Director-General after their “takeover”. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

Kids United performs during World Children’s Day. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Children make written commitments for youth engagement and sustainable development to hang on the “Wall of Hope” at UN Geneva. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



REACHING OUT TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The annual Graduate Study Programme, organized by the Information Service, is the longest-running educational programme of the UN. The fifty-fifth Programme gathered 50 students from 25 nations and a variety of academic backgrounds for two intense weeks of lectures, seminars and group projects exploring the role of the UN in preventing conflicts spurred by challenges like climate change, migration and violent extremism. For the first time, two students provided simultaneous interpretation in English and French, thus promoting multilingualism and inclusion, and opening the Programme to participants of diverse backgrounds. The students are studying interpretation at the University of Geneva.

The Service also coordinated the tenth edition of the Geneva Seminar Series for 120 university students at the Palais des Nations. Professor Satish Singh, geophysicist and head of the Mirage II expedition, delivered a live presentation via video link from the famous French scientific research ship, Marion Dufresne II. Dr. Singh explained how tsunamis are created and briefed the students on the search for better and faster means of detection.



Participants of the fifty-fifth Graduate Study Programme (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS

“Just three weeks, yet enough inspiration for a lifetime’s work in international law”

– Alero Fenemigho, Lecturer, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

“The insightful debates and discussions we’ve had in the course of the past three weeks and the admirable people I’ve met have reminded me of why I chose to practise and study international law.”

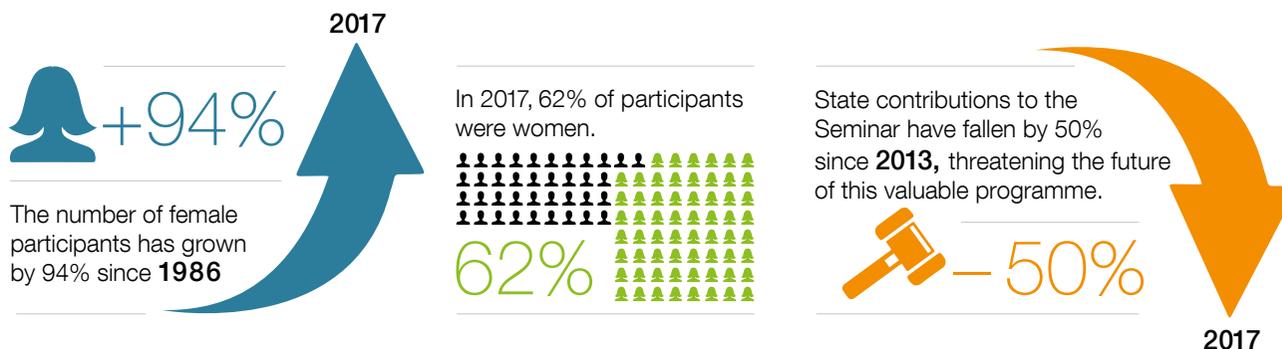
– Xinling Mary-Elisabeth Chong, State Counsel, Attorney-General’s Chambers, Singapore

Without the rule of law, we cannot have peace, development or human rights. With it, we have a durable framework to address the global challenges of today and tomorrow, which know no borders. Geneva witnessed the birth of modern, codified international law in 1864, with the signing of the First Geneva Convention. In the years that have followed, and in spite of several setbacks, the rule of law has emerged as the only guarantor of individual rights and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The future of the rule of law, however, depends on our ability to sustain the progress made and to pass the torch to the next generation. In that spirit, 23 young lawyers from around the world gathered at the Palais des Nations in July 2017 for the fifty-third session of the International Law Seminar.

Every year since 1965, UN Geneva has organized the International Law Seminar to familiarize future generations with the work of the United Nations in the field of international law. The programme has brought together more than 1,200 young international lawyers from 173 countries since its inception. Past participants include leading figures in contemporary international law, such as members of the International Law Commission and other expert bodies, well-known professors and practitioners of international law, and judges of the International Court of Justice.

Fellowships sponsored by Member States are essential to ensure that international lawyers from every region can take part in and contribute to the programme. The financial crisis has seriously affected the Seminar’s ability to help with participants’ costs. Nonetheless, voluntary contributions generously provided by several Member States made it possible to cover the travel and the living expenses of 12 fellows in 2017. Over the lifetime of the International Law Seminar, fellowships have funded 736 participants, helping to make sure that the next generation of international lawyers reflects our global diversity.

For over 50 years, the International Law Seminar has proved to be a vibrant and challenging training ground for the international legal professionals and scholars of tomorrow. The programme represents an investment, not only in the participants themselves, but in their societies. It is also an investment in our shared international community. Because the rule of law is the cornerstone of a more peaceful, safe and sustainable future for us all.



SPONSORSHIP BRINGS TOGETHER EXPERTS TO ADDRESS BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS THREAT

A sponsorship programme made it possible for 20 experts from around the world to participate in the 2017 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which took place in Geneva in December.

Australia, Canada, Germany and India provided voluntary contributions to allow a broader representation of global experts to join the 2017 meeting. Since its inception in 2011, the programme has allowed more than one hundred experts to participate in the annual meetings.

The Convention serves as the sole multilateral forum for discussing global biosecurity-related challenges. It was the first treaty to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. One hundred and seventy-nine States are parties to the Convention, making it an almost universal legal instrument that effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.

“The meeting is a unique opportunity for me to exchange views with other experts from across the globe about ways of strengthening our national system against the threat posed by the misuse of biological agents... I am very grateful that I could join this important event.”

– Kadiatou Dao, microbiologist at the National Institute of Public Health Research in Bamako, Mali



Kadiatou Dao, microbiologist at the National Institute of Public Health Research in Bamako, Mali (Photo courtesy of Kadiatou Dao)

FELLOWSHIPS FOR A SAFER WORLD

The UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament each year brings together a group of 25 diplomats from around the world to learn about disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues. Established by the General Assembly in 1978, the programme has trained over 950 public officials from more than 165 States. In 2017, the fellows visited organizations and entities working on disarmament and related issues in Austria, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United States of America.



UN Photos: Peter Kolarov

INTERNS WITH A MISSION

Youths make up nearly half of humanity, yet their concerns, ideas and perspectives are rarely heard in the halls of power. In an effort to bring the voices of the future into today's policy discussions, UN Geneva hosted in May 2017 the fourth edition of Interns with a Mission. Organized by and for interns from across International Geneva, the annual event has become a popular mainstay of the Geneva calendar. The 2017 edition brought together more than 300 participants to discuss the ways the Internet and digitalization affect youth employment.

Young people are entering the labour market at a time of great opportunities, but also of major challenges. "We can no more stop the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' than the Luddites could stop the first," the Director-General said in his opening remarks. "Instead, we need to recognize the possibilities that this revolution offers and work to guide it on the path of fairness, justice and sustainability."

Four panellists representing the private sector, a youth start-up, the International Labour Organization and the International Telecommunication Union shared their thoughts on the future of employment in the digital age. Agreeing that innovation would likely create jobs, the panellists urged the young audience to remain curious and creative.

The event aimed to promote dialogue between interns, Geneva-based diplomats and UN officials; to leverage the vision and energy of the youngest contributors to the work of the UN; and to bring them to the table and acknowledge their contributions. The event was also a starting point for interns to build their own networks and friendships. And, perhaps, some may eventually return to the UN to put their visions and ideas into practice.



UN Photo: Vadim Isakov

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACE

For over 80 years, the Palais des Nations has been the confluence of the world's nations. Its meeting rooms, offices and corridors have seen generations of leaders address the pressing issues of their time. Preserving this landmark is not only an act of cultural and architectural conservation, but an investment in the future of a proven asset. Member States recognized the value of the Palais des Nations when they approved the Strategic Heritage Plan. This ambitious project will ensure that the Palais des Nations continues to contribute to global peace, rights and well-being for decades to come.

A twenty-first century building for a twenty-first century United Nations

An important part of the Strategic Heritage Plan is the construction of a new 23,500-square-metre environmentally sustainable building. Its six floors will house offices, meeting rooms, technical rooms, a coffee shop and two internal courtyards. The building will welcome at least 1,400 UN staff members and will meet the latest environmental standards. Work started in 2017 and the building will be ready for occupancy at the end of 2019.

Upgrading technical equipment

The Palais des Nations is the hub for international collaboration, hosting more than 12,000 meetings a year on a range of issues that impact on the lives of every person, every day. At a time when nearly every issue has a global dimension, there is pressing demand for a neutral space like the Palais des Nations. To meet this need, UN Geneva must be at the forefront of conferencing technology. In 2017, upgrades were carried out in two conference rooms – 12 and 16 – and in the Council Chamber.

A Swiss vote of confidence

In a demonstration of their commitment to the United Nations, the Government of Switzerland, the Republic and Canton of Geneva and the City of Geneva agreed to a CHF 400 million loan package for the Strategic Heritage Plan. This generous, interest-free loan will cover just under 50% of the total project costs.

Keeping delegates and staff safe

Offering a safe, modern and functional working environment for delegates and UN staff is a top priority for UN Geneva and the Strategic Heritage Plan project.

Although well maintained, the Palais des Nations has not kept up with changing building codes, including accessibility and safety regulations. Many mechanical, electrical, audiovisual, and information and communication systems are at the end of their useful life. To care for the well-being of its occupants and reduce operational costs, a comprehensive renovation will begin in late 2018 or early 2019.



Artist's rendering of the new, environmentally sustainable building (Illustration: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP and Burckhardt+Partner SA)

TRANSLATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The millions of sentences translated each year at UN Geneva help create better translations for everyone. The United Nations Parallel Corpus encompasses UN documents that have been made available in the six official languages of the Organization, helping Google and academic researchers create stronger neural machine translation models, which translate full sentences rather than individual words or phrases. These models are thought to provide more accurate translations than the older “statistical” models of machine translation, though they still lack the level of nuance that only a human can provide.

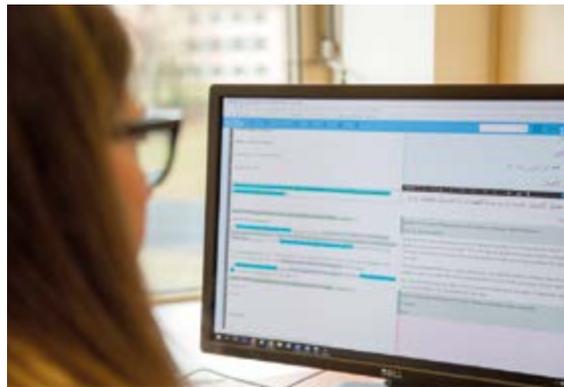
Despite the proliferation of free online translation services, computers still fall short of the precision and nuance required for UN reports, parliamentary documents and publications. For the UN Geneva Languages Service, the solution is for translators to combine their own linguistic finesse with machine processing’s ability to quickly retrieve translated texts. Together, human and machine can deliver products that are accurate, nuanced and timely on a wide range of complex issues like peace, security, human rights and international development.

Translation tools have evolved over the past two decades from pen and paper, to word processors, to computer-assisted translation using programs like eLUNa, the UN’s translation interface. One constant, however, is the importance of the translator’s judgment, explains Michelle Keating, Chief of the Languages Service.

“Machines are able to process data well. Humans are able to process ideas, nuances and political ambiguity well”, Ms. Keating said. Today, human subtlety combined with machine rapidity make accurate translations possible under ever-greater time constraints.

eLUNa is designed to retrieve previously translated segments, making it easier and faster for human operators to convey meaning across linguistic divides. It automatically identifies portions of text that have already been translated. The result: operators don’t spend time duplicating past efforts, and their translations are more consistent across documents.

Right now, it is often more time-consuming to edit a machine translation than it is for a human to do so, but Ms. Keating believes that UN translation technology will evolve as computer processing power increases and becomes cheaper. The future may bring “post-machine editing”, where translators would primarily edit machine-generated translations. Even so, humans will remain an integral part of the process, ensuring accuracy in meaning and tone. As computers play an ever greater role, translation will continue to depend on the passion, nuance and sensitivity of human translators.



Judy Fadel-Ostojic, the eLUNa focal point for the Arabic Translation Section, using eLUNa (UN Photo: Chris Lisee)

EXPLORING ISLAMIC LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

Is khul' divorce or annulment in Islamic legal systems? Do both parties have to consent to it? Who initiates it?

Answers to questions like these are especially important for UN Geneva linguists, who need a clear understanding of the terms and concepts in reports from Member States to the human rights treaty bodies and in documentation for the universal periodic review of human rights. Texts related to human rights make up as much as 60% of the translation workload at UN Geneva. At the universal periodic review, interpreters need to draw on the same knowledge to cover the dialogue between the State under review and the other States.

For language staff who may not speak Arabic or may not be familiar with Islamic legal terminology, the Spanish Translation Section in 2017 hosted a two-part, 20-hour seminar, on Islamic legal systems and family law, and on criminal law in Islamic legal traditions. The lunchtime sessions examined actual texts from State party reports, legal codes from Member States and news clips.

Translator Benjamín Tavera-Mateos said the vocabulary he had learned would be useful in providing nuanced translations.

English-language interpreter Garry Mullender, who does not speak Arabic, said the course would help him when relay interpreting from Arabic to English through French. "It's very important for us to get this background knowledge", he said. "I see that there's a lot of interest now among interpreters in learning Arabic or in learning more about the Islamic legal system, because it's a really important part of our job."

Taught in Spanish by a University of Granada expert, the seminar has been offered at UN Geneva every year since 2014.

FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER

Faster: document delivery and business intelligence

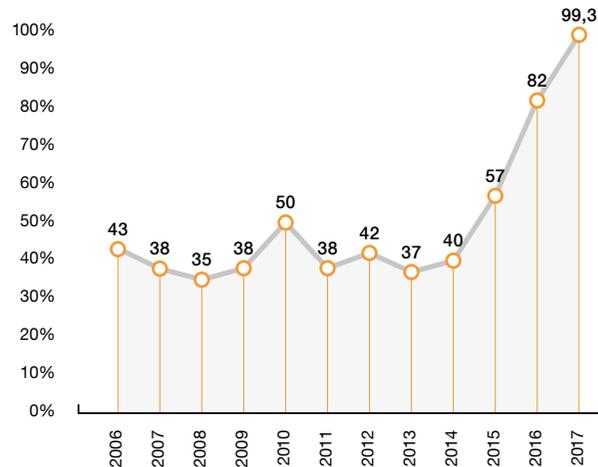
The Division of Conference Management's on-time document delivery rate increased for a fourth consecutive year in 2017. A record 99.3% of documents submitted to editors and translators before the deadline and within the allowed word count were issued on time, benefiting delegates as they prepared for meetings.

Each step of document processing uses the Pipeline Visualization Tool to prioritize work effectively. This and other tools use business intelligence software that integrates raw data sources to create a practical overview of the work in progress and in the queue.

UN Geneva is also collaborating with the Headquarters-based Office of Information and Communications Technology to pilot the migration of UN Geneva's business intelligence and decision-support tools onto a new standard platform, SAP HANA, a database and application development platform that can work up to 200% faster.

The increased speed and processing power will allow for more complex modelling, yielding greater efficiencies at UN Geneva and increasing cost-effectiveness. The new configuration will boost productivity by allowing the Division of Conference Management to consider much more complex scenarios when planning and coordinating its workflows.

Percentage of documents issued on time



Higher: studio-quality videos on the go

Interactive publications are more vivid and vibrant than ever, thanks to the Production and Support Service's new 4K camera, which yields ultra-high definition footage to supplement print and digital documents.

The camera's powerful sensor eliminates the need for extra lighting or a studio backdrop, meaning events are now easily filmed by a single person. "This camera allows us to save some money on additional equipment that usually goes with producing good interviews," said Vadim Isakov, Chief of the Design and Desktop Publishing Unit.

The footage is edited on industry-standard software to produce high-resolution graphics, eye-catching colours and studio-quality audio.

The Service saw more demand for its photography in 2017, to add visual appeal to publications. Its media arsenal also includes a 360-degree video camera, a drone for aerial footage, and audio equipment for field recording and podcasting.



Philippe Morard shoots video for the #KidsWannaKnow project. (UN Photo: Chris Lisee)

Stronger: powerful conference management

The use of Indico accelerated in 2017 as UN Geneva continued to roll out the powerful conference management tool across the organization and beyond. At 364 conferences comprising 5,157 sessions, it handled 59,171 registrations, 50,568 attendee approvals and the printing of 38,377 badges.

Indico is a flexible and robust system that makes it easier to manage conferences – the rooms, dates, times and attendees – from one platform. It allows conference managers to easily see and control participant and venue information, and can even use predefined criteria to automatically approve or reject registrations. Indico is continually updated to accommodate the needs of its growing user base.

Infographic: Use of Indico



THE EVOLUTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING AT UN GENEVA

We are living through an information revolution. Anyone with an Internet connection can access more information today than at any point in human history. Whereas information was once the preserve of the rich and powerful, it is now increasingly shared. In this digital age, whither libraries? Do these venerable depositories of knowledge have a future? To this question, the UN Library Geneva offers an emphatic “yes”. Technological transformations may bring challenges, but they also offer opportunities to those willing to embrace change.

In the midst of this information revolution, the Library is looking to the future with two initiatives. The first builds on the unique wealth of knowledge accumulated by the Library and the UN over the decades. It brings together UN Geneva’s resources into a knowledge and learning commons, a one-stop shop for learning and multilingualism, where researchers, UN staff and members of the public can come together to collaborate and draw on the resources of the Library.

In parallel, UN Geneva is spearheading a collaborative approach to modernize and streamline the ties that bind the UN Libraries. This approach is meant to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices between the thousands of national and specialized libraries of the global UN knowledge network. Most prominently, the Library and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York are using technology to combine their strengths, making it easier for Member States to access the information they need to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This collaborative approach extends to educational partners in Geneva, such as the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. This spirit of collaboration is also at the heart of the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem, a knowledge-sharing scheme that includes a variety of partners in Geneva and beyond.



Photo: UN Geneva Library

In a rapidly changing world, the UN is developing new ways to train and equip its staff with the knowledge and skills they will need to tackle the challenges of tomorrow. One of these essential skills is multilingualism. Learning languages fosters tolerance, inclusivity and diversity. A commitment to multilingualism makes it possible for the UN to communicate the ambitious objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals and to promote peace and human rights.

To help ensure that staff have the language skills and know-how they need, UN Geneva created in 2017 the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism. Integrating the latest teaching techniques and technologies, the Centre offers over seven hundred high-quality, innovative and effective courses, reaching some ten thousand participants each year. Its language training programme offers a range of courses in all six official UN languages to serve UN staff, their spouses and members of permanent missions. Other courses focus on career development, information technology, management and communication. Through the Centre, UN Geneva equips the UN system and its partners with the skills and tools they need to serve “we the peoples” in the twenty-first century.

INVESTING IN THE UNITED NATIONS’ GREATEST ASSET: ITS PEOPLE



UN Photo: Violaine Martin

INVESTING IN OUR COMMON HERITAGE AND SHARED FUTURE

The Palais des Nations, the seat of UN Geneva and the first common possession of the nations of the world, is an important part of our shared heritage. Originally built between 1929 and 1936, the Palais des Nations is one of the most active centres for multilateral diplomacy worldwide, comprising 34 conference rooms and servicing approximately 12,000 meetings per year.

Over the past ten years, several Member States have generously financed the complete renovation and refurbishment of some of UN Geneva's most important conference rooms. This includes the renovations of the Russian Room and the Emirates Room (Room XVII) in 2016, the Turkmen Room in 2014, the Kazakh Room (Cinema 14) in 2012, the Moroccan Room (S4) in 2011 and the exquisite Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room (Room XX) in 2008, a gift from the Government of Spain. In 2017, the State of Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding with UN Geneva to finance the renovation of Room XIX, which will be inaugurated in 2019. These donations are trend-setting examples of state-of-the-art conference facilities coalesced with the vibrant cultural heritage of our Member States.

Governments and other donors have started to invest in not only the physical structure of the Palais, but in the many initiatives for sustainable peace and development within these walls. The continued funding of special projects such as the Perception Change Project, the Mediation Support Project and the SDG Lab, has strengthened international cooperation in Geneva. Furthermore, in 2017, UN Geneva benefited from a substantial donation for the digitization of the League of Nations archives and the restoration of the iconic Celestial Sphere. The Interpol Foundation for a Safer World also donated funds for the development of a Security Masterplan for UN Geneva.

This increase in voluntary contributions is in great part due to successful fundraising efforts led by the Director-General. It also reflects the growing interest in the work of UN Geneva and its preservation. As more actors leave their mark by investing in UN Geneva, the Organization will continue to adapt and welcome new collaborations. The Office of the Director-General is already working on a plan to modernize the way it runs new partnerships, and to reach out more efficiently to the network surrounding UN Geneva, as well as towards potential new actors.

For more information and to support our work, please contact unog.front.office@un.org.

Donations to the UN Geneva art collection

The UN Geneva artworks collection, which consists of more than 2,000 artworks and artefacts, expanded in 2017. Donations such as the stunning cloisonné vase offered by the People's Republic of China in January, or the outdoor sculpture "Thoughts and Desires" offered by the Republic of Azerbaijan, have contributed to the enrichment of the cultural heritage of the Palais des Nations and are appreciated by over 120,000 visitors annually. These will be the last donations accepted until the renovation and construction planned under the Strategic Heritage plan end and the donation policy changes.



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

Sustainable Development Goal 17 calls for a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, and the private sector plays an increasingly important role in implementing the Goals. It is an engine of economic growth, innovation and job creation, and provides a wealth of resources, expertise and knowledge.

In line with the objective of the Perception Change Project, which promotes the vital work of the UN and its partners, the Director-General has continued to increase public outreach on the Goals at the local and global levels, including with the private sector.

As Switzerland is one of the most important business and financial centres in the world, the Director-General addressed hundreds of bankers at the Economic Perspectives conference organized by Credit Suisse in 2017. He also addressed a large audience of international bankers at a special event following the Pictet Wealth Management Seminar and engaged with many business leaders at the annual World Business Council for Sustainable Development event, “Roadmaps for impact in today’s reality”, on the work of the UN and the role of the private sector in sustainable development.

Other opportunities for private sector engagement in 2017 included UN Open Day and the popular “Geneva Mix & Mash” events. The SDG Lab, launched by the Director-General in 2017, is engaging with the private sector as part of its effort to maximize the added value of the diversity of stakeholders present in International Geneva in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Lab co-created the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem group, which convenes, connects and builds bridges between 150 representatives of UN organizations, the private sector, civil society, academics and Governments, with the aim of fostering partnerships to implement the Goals.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS: BRINGING THE VOICE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO UN GENEVA

“Without the private sector we will not have the necessary innovation, we will not have the necessary capacity to discover new markets, new products, new services and to be able to develop new areas in the economy.”

– Secretary-General António Guterres

2017 **IN** PHOTOS



General Secretary António Guterres (second left) and Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly (third left), meet with Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China (far right) on **18 JANUARY 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



A Navya driverless electric shuttle on display at the Palais des Nations during the Global Road Safety Film Festival on **20 FEBRUARY 2017**. (UN Photo: Violaine Martin)



Ivan Pictet, President of the Fondation pour Genève, presents Director-General Michael Møller with the Prix de la Fondation pour Genève in Victoria Hall on **24 MARCH 2017**. He received the prize in recognition of his work promoting International Geneva. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Secretary-General António Guterres (right) with Didier Burkhalter (left), Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland during a press conference on **24 APRIL 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Young boys listen to a panel discussion during the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on **31 MAY 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



A general view of participants during the opening conference of the Global Compact for Migration on **19 JUNE 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY



TAKE ACTION! INSPIRE CHANGE!

"COURAGE WAS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR,
TRUMPH OVER IT". N. MANDELA

CONTINUATION



A participant commits to ending poverty during Nelson Mandela International Day on **18 JULY 2017**.
(UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Football superstar Neymar Jr., new Goodwill Ambassador for Handicap International, poses for a photo at the Place des Nations with representatives from Handicap International on **15 AUGUST 2017**. (UN Photo: Elma Okic)



Aziyadé Poltier (second left), Head of the UN Geneva Perception Change Project, and Laurence Levrat-Pictet (left), President of Genève-roule, during the Great Multicultural Cycling Parade on **22 SEPTEMBER 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



14,000 visitors came to the Palais des Nations to learn more about the work of the United Nations during Open Day on **7 OCTOBER 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Director-General Michael Møller speaking to Kofi Annan, Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation and former United Nations Secretary-General, during the launch of the Global State of Democracy on **29 NOVEMBER 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)



Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, addresses the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum on **18 DECEMBER 2017**. (UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré)

ANNEX

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA ORGANIZATION CHART

The Director-General

- Office of the Chef de Cabinet
- Protocol and Liaison Service
- Political Affairs and Partnerships Section
- Legal Office
- NGO Liaison Unit

Security and Safety Service

- Office of the Chief of Service
- Operations Branch
- Operations Support Branch
- Administrative Unit
- Project Management and Coordination Unit

Information Service

- Press and External Relations Section
- Radio and Television Section
- Visitors' Service

Division of Administration

- Strategic Heritage Plan
- Central Support Services
- Financial Resources Management Service
- Human Resources Management Service
- Information and Communication Technology Service

Division of Conference Management

- Executive Office
- Central Planning and Coordination Service
- Interpretation Service
- Languages Service
- Production and Support Service

Library and Cultural Activities Committee

- Library Services Section
- Institutional Memory Section
- Cultural Diplomacy and Outreach Section

Conference on Disarmament*

Special Projects

- Perception Change Project
- SDG Lab
- Mediation Support
- Celestial Sphere Restoration Project

*Note: The Director-General of UN Geneva also serves as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and is the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference on Disarmament, which is serviced by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Connect with the United Nations Office at Geneva



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@UNGeneva
@UNOG_DG
@UNOGPolitical
@UNOGLibrary
@GenevaImpact
@SDGLab



On Facebook:

UN Geneva
UNOG Library
Strategic Heritage Plan



On Instagram:

@UNGeneva



On Snapchat:

UNGeneva



On YouTube:

UN Geneva
www.youtube.com/user/UNinformationGeneva
UN Geneva Library
www.youtube.com/channel/UCtbm9kgq0_M7r_VHDxqVD4g



On Flickr:

UN Geneva
www.flickr.com/photos/unisgeneva
Strategic Heritage Plan
www.flickr.com/photos/142782943@N05/

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