

2009 Highlights

We take pride in our work. Throughout 2009, the Divisions and Services of UNOG have organized, or been involved in, a variety of projects that have helped to take forward the work of the United Nations. This section of our Annual Report includes a selection of activities that each in their own way illustrates the different dimensions of UNOG activities in support of the overall goals of the United Nations.



On 29 May 2009, the 65-member Conference on Disarmament – the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body – adopted its first Programme of Work since 1998. This represents progress that could lead to real advances on disarmament and strengthening of international peace and security. The Conference on Disarmament Secretariat, headed by the Director-General in his capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference, provided political and practical support and assistance to the Member States throughout the discussions that led to the adoption.



More than 1,000 teenagers from public schools in Geneva and Lausanne took part in a public event organized by the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each participant received a special edition of the Declaration, illustrated by the famous Swiss cartoonist called Mix&Remix. The students also attended a round table moderated by Swiss journalists, where international experts discussed the values of the Declaration and briefed them on specific human rights. The event served as an important platform for raising awareness among younger generations of the continued need for protection and promotion of human rights – one of the three pillars of the work of the United Nations.



Through the Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS), UNOG provides technology transfer opportunities to the United Nations family. In 2009, ICTS supported the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in advancing its statistics presentation capabilities, as UNHCR adopted UNOG-developed technology called RefScout. The product is a publically web-based technology, which enables all stakeholders to explore and analyze thousands of records of refugee statistics, through interactive maps, graphs and tables by regions and countries. Accurate data are critical to policymakers to shape sustainable long-term solutions and facilitate humanitarian action.



The Director-General of UNOG is the Designated Official for Security for Switzerland. On 19 February 2009, the Security Management Group, comprised of executive heads of United Nations entities with a presence in Switzerland, endorsed the first-ever Security Plan for Switzerland. The Plan was among the first to be completed within the United Nations system. The UNOG Security and Safety Service compiled this comprehensive security management manual through an inclusive process with input from all United Nations entities and based on a thorough threat and risk assessment. Developed within the context of the continuous strengthening of system-wide security management, the Plan is aimed at ensuring coherence in policy, while taking into account local conditions in its implementation, to ensure the safety and security of all who come to United Nations premises in Switzerland.



On 1 April 2009, the Division of Conference Management (DCM) organized its first-ever welcome briefing for 71 new staff members, which made up almost 10 per cent of the Division's human resources and the largest ever single intake of staff. The new staff members represented many nationalities and levels, embodying the diversity of the United Nations. The programme included presentations about all aspects of the work of DCM, its composition and its main clients, as well as a backstage tour of how and where meetings are organized, interpretation services are coordinated and documents are produced. The briefing helped to facilitate the timely integration of the newcomers and enabled them to contribute more effectively to the work of UNOG.



In May 2009, the UNOG Library hosted, in collaboration with the archives of the International Labour Organization, the annual session of the International Council on Archives, Section of International Organizations (SIO), with participants from 21 international organizations. Researchers explained their needs and expectations in archival research and shared their experience. Experts presented the legal and practical framework for access policies in national archives and intergovernmental institutions. As a result of the session, SIO issued "Recommendations on Public Access to Records and Archives of International Organizations", which now provide a basis for harmonization of policies and rules between organizations to facilitate consultation of records and archives. This will also benefit the many users of the unique material at UNOG.