



UNITED NATIONS
GENEVA

Shaping renewed multilateralism

2021
UN Geneva
Annual Report

Contents

Foreword	5	Projecting multilateral diplomacy to the world	50	United Nations Women's Guild Geneva ceremony honours Children's Walks	85	Twentieth anniversary of the United Nations receiving the Nobel Peace Prize	132
2021 in numbers	6	<i>Multi-what?</i> A short guide to multilateralism and its impact on our daily lives	52	Publications to inspire global change	86	Reggae music: a way to remember slavery	133
Chapter one	10	Archives and human rights	53	Travellers greeted with a panoramic view of International Geneva	90	Chapter five	134
A centre for modern multilateralism	10	Chapter two	54	How does International Geneva make an impact on everyone's life?	91	A centre for learning and development	134
A modern workplace for modern multilateralism	12	A centre for sustainability	54	#YouNeedToKnow campaign travels from Geneva to Glasgow	92	Managing teams in the next normal: from disruption to choice	136
Sustained COVID-19 response enables multilateral diplomacy to continue at UN Geneva	23	Sustainability at the heart of Building H	56	Perception Change Project meet-ups	93	Hearing staff voices as we reimagine the "next normal"	137
Adapting our conferencing strategy to better serve stakeholders' needs	27	UN Geneva contributes to sustainable transport in Geneva	57	From UN Geneva to every corner of the globe	94	Career Tips Thursdays	138
Virtually and in person: global leaders at UN Geneva	28	Accelerating the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem	58	UN Geneva joins the global effort to combat misinformation	95	conecta: a platform designed for cross-system collaboration	139
New access point at the Palais des Nations accreditation pavilion	35	Building Bridges and unlocking investment in sustainable development	59	Podcasts help UN Geneva reach new audiences around the world	96	Collaborating virtually to share knowledge at UN Geneva	140
Safety, inclusion and progress at COP 26	36	Unpacking the UN regional forums on sustainable development	61	Languages and multilingualism at UN Geneva	98	Peer-to-peer learning: a startup guide is here!	142
Sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons	37	Building resilience to COVID-19 and future pandemics: policy brief launch by the SDG Lab and the Geneva Science-Policy Interface	62	Many languages, one common mission	102	Online language exams aligned with the United Nations Language Framework	143
Working towards the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention	38	Charting the road to recovery: joint SDG Lab–World Bank briefing for permanent missions examines the <i>Africa's Pulse</i> report	63	Accessibility as a cornerstone of communication	103	Using data science to transform human resources strategy	144
The participation and role of women in international security: perspectives from the Conference on Disarmament	39	Geneva Dialogue on scaling open innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals	64	Shaping a more equal United Nations through disability-inclusive language	104	UN Geneva co-creates training on innovation for senior UN system managers	145
Promoting the inclusion of youth perspectives in multilateral disarmament processes: International Youth Day in the Conference on Disarmament	40	<i>It Takes a Global Crisis</i> : podcast series	65	Integrating accessibility and inclusion	105	Visitors' Service creates virtual tours	146
Youth for Biosecurity Initiative	41	It's a wrap: season 1 of <i>GO solutions durables</i> ends	66	Equal opportunity and the full enjoyment of human rights	106	Exchanging knowledge across continents	147
CyberMediation Network: embracing the potential of digital technologies for mediation	42	Replicating the SDG Lab model to help achieve the Global Goals	68	Chapter four	108	Are you part of the #UNGenevaReads community?	148
International Law Commission reconvenes	43	Sustainable industries for a healthy planet	69	A centre for art, culture and history	108	Annexes	150
The return of Executive Briefings	44	Chapter three	70	Cultural diplomacy at UN Geneva	110	UN Geneva senior management team	152
Multilateral cooperation through intercultural and interreligious dialogue	45	A centre for advocacy and outreach	70	International Bazaar returns to the Palais des Nations	113	UN Geneva	154
A high-level call for peace, diversity and our common humanity	46	UN Geneva puts peace at the heart of its agenda	72	Ciné-ONU Geneva continues throughout the pandemic	114	Useful contacts	155
Librarians and archivists at your service online, on-site and on demand	47	UN Geneva and UEFA join forces to promote sustainability and peace	75	Art, women and history at Geneva's Musée Rath	115		
<i>UN75: The Future We Want, the United Nations We Need</i> – final report launched at UN Geneva	48	Commemorative events at UN Geneva	76	Images of the Palais des Nations displayed across Geneva	118		
Reaffirming the values of the Charter of the United Nations	49	Amplifying voices for gender equality	81	<i>L'Oiseau bleu</i> at UN Geneva	120		
		Spotlight on women in security at UN Geneva	82	<i>HISTORIES</i> : the history of the Palais des Nations	123		
		Six young activists set an inspiring example	83	Heritage protection as part of the Strategic Heritage Plan: renovation of Room 11	124		
		UN Geneva broadens its outreach to Swiss schools	84	Restoring the historic Villa la Pelouse	127		
				Preserving institutional memory during renovations	129		
				History in six official languages and more: UN Library and Archives Geneva	130		
				Online access to the League of Nations archives	131		



UN Photo: François Vouid

Foreword

In light of the many interrelated challenges the world faces, from humanitarian crises to economic shocks, and from climate change to pandemics, international cooperation is needed more than ever. But multilateralism is under fire. Solutions are required, and urgently. Member States recognized this when, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, they called for multilateralism to be reinvigorated.

It is clear that we need a multilateralism that is fit for the future, one that is modern, inclusive and innovative. UN Geneva is helping to shape this by also becoming more modern, inclusive and innovative.

In 2021, the completion of important phases of the Strategic Heritage Plan, and particularly the opening of the new Building H, encouraged new, more collaborative ways of working. Our embrace of technology to facilitate online and hybrid conferencing enabled greater participation and engagement by Member States, civil society and other stakeholders. And new approaches to outreach and communication have helped us communicate the work of the United Nations to more people than ever before.

At the same time, UN Geneva adapted to the evolving epidemiological situation to ensure the continuity of multilateral diplomacy and the delivery of our

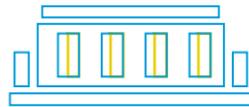
mandates while supporting the safety and well-being of staff, delegates and all who visit our premises. We also continued to put the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the forefront of our work, developing partnerships in pursuit of the Global Goals and further incorporating sustainability into our projects.

For 75 years, UN Geneva has stood strong as a centre for multilateralism, working for peace, rights and well-being. Now, through innovation, flexibility and dedication, UN Geneva is ready to help shape a renewed multilateralism for the future.

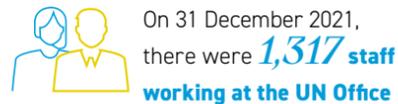
Tatiana Valovaya

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

2021 in numbers



People and operations management



On 31 December 2021, there were **1,317 staff** working at the UN Office at Geneva, including temporary staff, of **100 nationalities**, from a wide range of professional backgrounds.

46% of UN Geneva staff were female and **54%** were male.

Payroll services provided for nearly **6,000 UN system staff**

Administrative and operational support provided to more than **40 UN system entities** in Europe and their field offices around the world



The Human Resources Management Service provided:

- General human resources management
- Policy and legal services
- Learning and training activities
- Medical and welfare services

The Client Support Centre responded to more than **11,000 phone calls** and **76,000 remote service requests**.

The Financial Resources Management Service supported:

- Accounts and trust fund management
- Treasury
- Payroll and accounts payable
- Budget
- Procurements valued at approximately \$224,043,000
- The purchase of commodities from vendors from over 35 different countries
- The processing of an average of 23,000 payments per month

More than **171,660 items** of incoming and outgoing mail and diplomatic pouches processed on behalf of Geneva-based UN entities



Health and well-being

The UN Geneva Medical Service:

- Provided medical support and advice to staff, including workplace COVID-19 contact tracing and 24/7 telephone support
- Provided 1,357 flu vaccines to UN personnel in Geneva

More than **1,500 participants** attended well-being webinars provided by UN Geneva's Staff Counsellor's Office, Knowledge and Learning Commons, and Centre for Learning and Multilingualism.

The United Nations Staff Mutual Insurance Society against Sickness and Accident provided medical insurance for staff, retirees, and their dependents – a total of over **32,000 persons**.



Security and safety

214,259 pedestrians and **154,901 vehicles** screened at the Palais des Nations by the Security and Safety Service

32,379 identification badges issued by the Pass and Identification Unit

374 protective operations coordinated
2,463 hours of training provided



Environmental awareness

2,166 tons of CO₂ equivalent emitted by UN Geneva. Most of these emissions were due to consumption of natural gas and other fuel for heating. Through a carbon-offset programme, **UN Geneva is climate-neutral**.

296 tons of waste produced by UN Geneva, of which **98%** was reused, recycled, composted, incinerated or recovered

507,539 m³ of water used by UN Geneva



Conference management

5,298 meetings organized, of which:

- 2,382 were in person
- 436 were virtual
- 2,480 were hybrid

41% of meetings included interpretation services.

401 summary records produced

70,543,915 words translated



Strategic Heritage Plan

40 weekly briefings to update Strategic Heritage Plan focal points on renovation progress

Over **300 staff** attended a series of virtual Strategic Heritage Plan open day events on topics such as landscaping, the design features of Building H, and heritage protection.

51 tours of Building H for staff, plus **9 protocol tours**, for a total of **343 people**

More than **1,200 staff** moved into the new Building H.



Director-General

Chaired **5 meetings** of the Security Management Team

Gave **2 briefing sessions** to regional groups

Welcomed **50 high-level visitors** at UN Geneva, including **7 Heads of State** and **Government**, **27 foreign ministers**, **2 representatives of royal families** and **8 representatives of the Swiss authorities**. The Secretary-General visited twice and the Deputy Secretary-General visited once.



Held **88 meetings** with Member States, both in person and virtually, with representatives from all **5 geographical regions**; **23** were with **Heads of State** and **Government**, **foreign ministers** or other **high-level dignitaries**



Held **87 meetings** with representatives of UN entities, other international organizations, civil society, and private sector institutions, and with academics, both in person and virtually; **52 meetings** were with senior UN officials and heads of international organizations

37 new permanent representatives presented their credentials and **2 new permanent observers** presented their nomination letters.

6 Executive Briefings held, with an average participation of **45 delegations** per briefing.



Gave **18 interviews**

Delivered **124 speeches**, including **28 speeches** virtually and **39 video messages**

Tweeted **472 times**



Went on **2 missions**:

- **October**: to attend the opening of the **Lampa International Film Festival** in Moscow
- **November**: to attend the **Montreux International Tourism Forum** in Montreux, Switzerland



Peace talks

UN Geneva hosted talks

to advance peace processes in Cyprus, Libya and Syria and in the context of the Geneva International Discussions:

- **Geneva International Discussions**: 4 rounds in March, June, October and December
- **Informal 5+1 meeting** on Cyprus: April
- **5+5 Joint Military Commission** (Libya): October
- **Syrian Constitutional Committee**: January and October



Liaison with non-governmental organizations

2,998 representatives of **748 NGOs** in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council accredited to UN Geneva

Year	Accredited representatives	NGOs
2021	2,998	748
2020	3,950	1,153
2019	5,142	1,048



Learning and development

3,446 participants in **311 language training courses**, with **239** students in Arabic, **215** students in Chinese, **548** students in English, **1,567** students in French, **303** students in Russian and **574** students in Spanish

3,890 participants in management and communication training activities across **74 training workshops**, **13 lunchtime learning events**, **3 outreach workshops** and **148 hours** of coaching

158 candidates sat exams in **38 sessions**.

65% of participants in the activities of the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism were **female** and **35%** were **male**.

3,355 attendees at **50 Knowledge and Learning Commons sessions**

22 online learning resource guides and **11 conference primers** for diplomats and delegates produced by the Knowledge and Learning Commons



Records and archives

1,281 answers provided

through the "Ask an Archivist" online system

366 staff and **external researchers** assisted via phone and email

528 on-site visits to the Archives Reading Room

27,148 page views of Archives research guides

740,254 page views of the online Archives platform, catalogue and repository

36,556 records digitized



Total Digital Access to the League of Nations Archives Project

3,091,997 pages scanned, bringing the total number **now scanned** to more than **13,000,000** pages

15,000 maps scanned



Library

12,000 Library users

7,415 answers provided through the Library Virtual Reference Desk

42,791 online catalogue searches

178,278 views of research guides pages

332 access badge requests and

1,493 on-site users of the Library

9,664 UN documents uploaded to the Official Document System at the request of internal and external users



Cultural activities

10 cultural

activities at the Palais des Nations, attended by **800 people**

2 online events that drew thousands of participants



Communications and outreach

Nearly **3,000 copies** of the **pocket map** of International Geneva distributed

The *Not a Woman's Job?* exhibition received over **170 photos** from **71 entities**, including **50 permanent missions** and **permanent observer offices**, as well as UN agencies and partner organizations.

As of 2021, **90,000 Perception Change Project publications** have been distributed, including **150 copies** of *Sakura*, the latest book on gender equality.

2,650 Perception Change Project publications donated to the Geneva Red Cross and distributed to young children for Christmas

1,774,100 followers across UN Geneva's **5 main social media platforms** as of 31 December:

- **Twitter** (English): **718,000** (+27%)

- **Facebook**: **669,000** (+44%)

- **Instagram**: **294,000** (+15%)

- **LinkedIn**: **60,000** (+30%)

- **Twitter** (French): **3,100** (+113%)

148.8 million impressions (the number of times @UNGeneva posts were seen by social media users) across the five social media platforms

5.1 million engagements (the number of times social media users liked, commented on or shared @UNGeneva posts) across the five social media platforms

377 features, stories, studio messages, news edits and **spots** produced and distributed via UNifeed

966 webcast videos produced

Podcast production:

- **49 episodes** of the English-language news podcast *UN Catch-Up*

- **67 episodes** of the French-language news podcast *ONU Info Genève*

- **25 episodes** of *The Next Page*, the podcast on multilateralism

2,400 photos uploaded to UN Geneva's Flickr page

460,850 unique visitors to ungeneva.org, who looked at a total of **1,662,717 pages**

5,774 visitors to the Palais des Nations took a guided tour – physical or virtual

11 information programmes for a total of **738 university** and **graduate students**

79 participants from **53 countries** in the **59th Graduate Study Programme**, the UN's longest-running educational initiative

8 Ciné-ONU sessions

99 hybrid biweekly press briefings

116 press conferences given by officials from UN agencies, programmes and funds, and Member States



The SDG Lab

355 people from over **200 organizations** make up the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem, a dynamic network dedicated to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

251 people subscribed to a **social media group** where information about resources and events relating to the Sustainable Development Goals is shared.

18 in-person and **virtual briefings** on the Sustainable Development Goals offered to **1,200 people**, including diplomats, students and business executives

9 modules in the **SDG Lab Learning Journey**, a resource to help individuals and organizations set up a lab of their own or take action around the Goals that matter to their community



Conference on Disarmament

The Conference on Disarmament held **50 formal** and **4 informal** plenary meetings.

53 speakers of ministerial rank joined the high-level segment of the Conference.

1

Chapter one

A centre for modern multilateralism



A modern workplace for modern multilateralism

To support modern multilateralism, UN Geneva must also modernize itself. One way in which we are doing this is through the [Strategic Heritage Plan](#), which involves the extensive renovation and modernization of 170,000 square metres of the Palais des Nations complex, and the construction of a new permanent office building: Building H.

Constructed mainly in the 1930s, the Palais des Nations has been well maintained over the years but has never been comprehensively renovated. In recent years, it became evident that much of the mechanical, electrical and plumbing infrastructure was coming to the end of its useful life, and that harmful construction material needed to be removed, infrastructure updated, and modern health and safety codes met.

Consequently, in 2015 the General Assembly approved the Strategic Heritage Plan project to urgently renovate the historic Palais des Nations, with a total project budget of SwF 836.5 million. The aims of the Strategic Heritage Plan are to modernize buildings and conference support systems, improve working conditions and safety, provide better accessibility for persons with disabilities and reduce energy costs, while at the same time protecting the heritage of the buildings. This once-in-a-generation renovation project is one of the largest currently under way in Europe.

Turn to page 124 to see how UN Geneva is protecting heritage treasures while renovating the Palais des Nations.

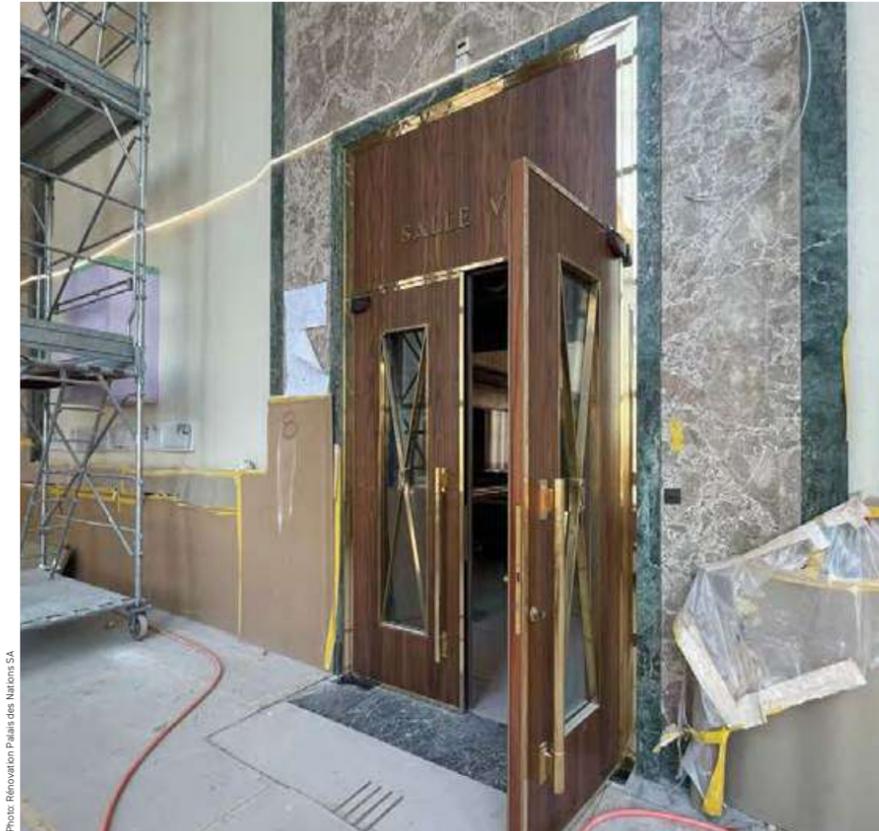


Photo: Renovation Palais des Nations SA

The doors of some meeting rooms in the Palais des Nations are being renovated to make them fire-resistant, and their heritage elements are being maintained.

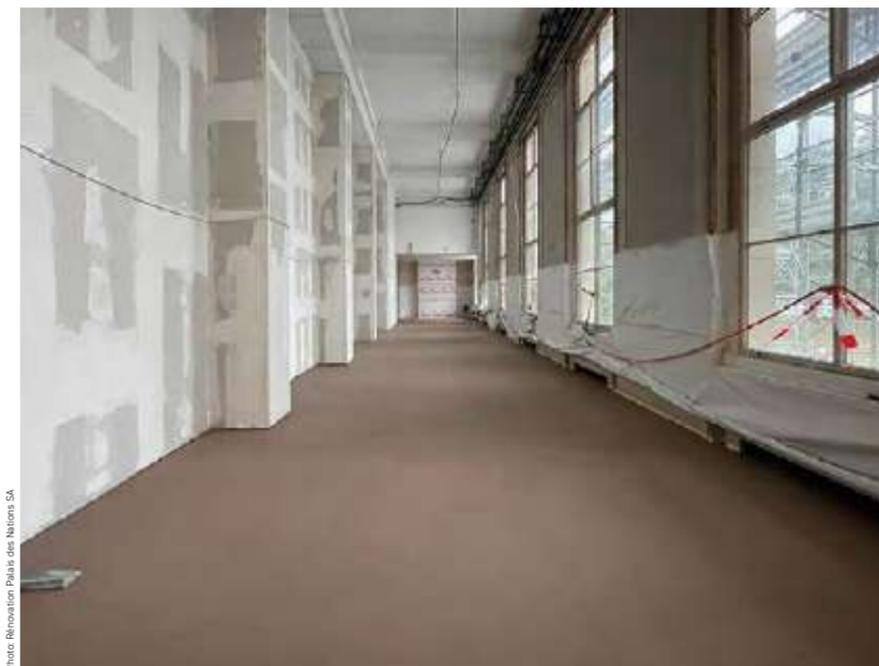


Photo: Renovation Palais des Nations SA

The side corridors of the Assembly Hall are being restored to their initial shape. The marble wall cladding, the amber-coloured window trimming and the original full-height windows are being kept as significant elements from the original design.

Inauguration of Building H: a 21st-century building for a 21st-century United Nations

After breaking ground in 2017, and then facing significant challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular supply chain issues and the temporary closure of the worksite during a nationwide lockdown, this year, right on its 75th anniversary, UN Geneva inaugurated Building H, one of the major projects of the Strategic Heritage Plan. This was an important milestone for UN Geneva as it continues to work towards supporting a renewed and modern multilateral diplomacy.

The inauguration took place on 1 November in the presence of the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Ignazio Cassis; the President of the State Council of Geneva, Serge Dal Busco; the Mayor of the City of Geneva, Frédérique Perler; a State Councillor of Geneva, Nathalie Fontanet; the Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya; and representatives of many Member States.

Building H offers the necessary facilities, infrastructure and technology to advance and improve UN Geneva's provision of high-quality and modern conferencing services to the international community. Made possible thanks to the generous and strong commitment of Member States, Building H is an important investment in the future of the United Nations family in Geneva and sets the standard for new ways of working.

With its modern and sustainable design, the new building can accommodate up to 1,500 staff from a range of different entities. Such proximity will encourage cross-divisional work and collaboration, bring significant operational efficiencies and reduce the overall cost of operations.

“When we laid the foundation stone for the building ... we wanted to provide a suitable setting for sustainable, forward-looking multilateral diplomacy. And we have succeeded. Now it's up to us to make sure that this house bubbles with life and ideas.”

Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Ignazio Cassis, during the inauguration

Turn to page 56 to learn about the sustainability features of Building H.



Scan the QR code to watch the [inauguration ceremony](#).



Scan the QR code to take a [video tour](#) of the new Building H.

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya (centre) shows Secretary-General António Guterres (left) the Building H construction site in April.



UN Photo: Yvelaine Martin

A ribbon is cut to officially open Building H. From left to right: the Mayor of the City of Geneva, Frédérique Perler; the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Ignazio Cassis; the Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya; the President of the State Council of Geneva, Serge Dal Busco; and a State Councillor of Geneva, Nathalie Fontanet

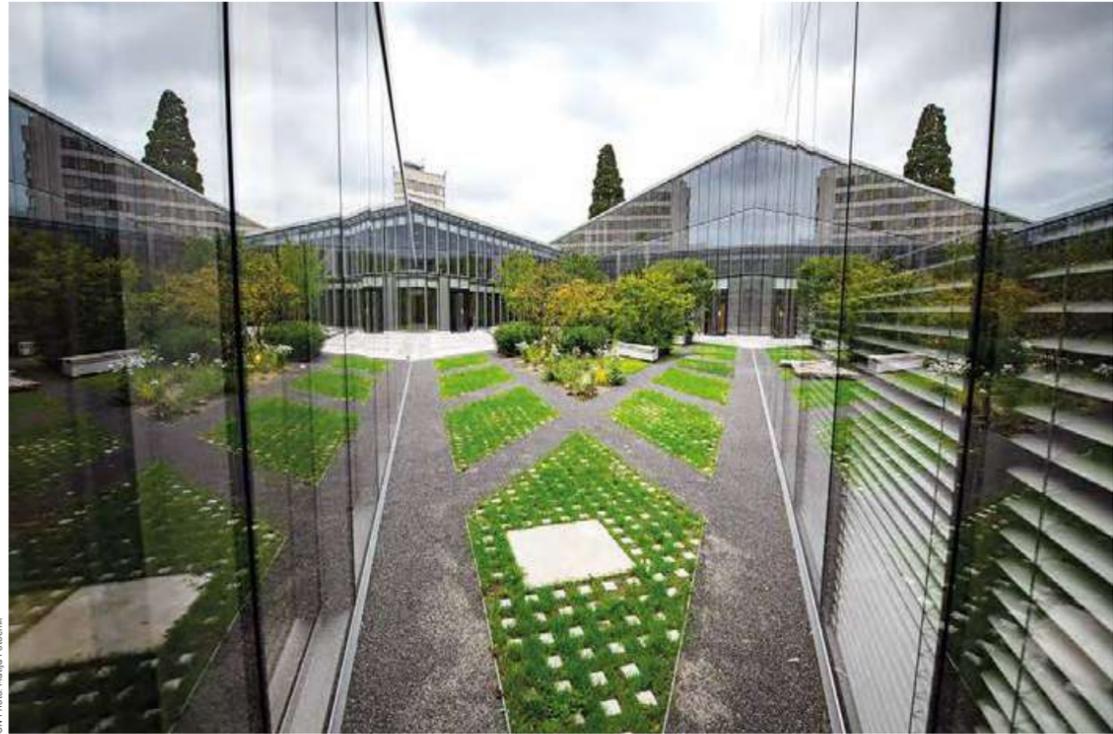
The Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, shows the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Ignazio Cassis, Building H, during its inauguration.



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré



UN Photo: Yvelaine Martin



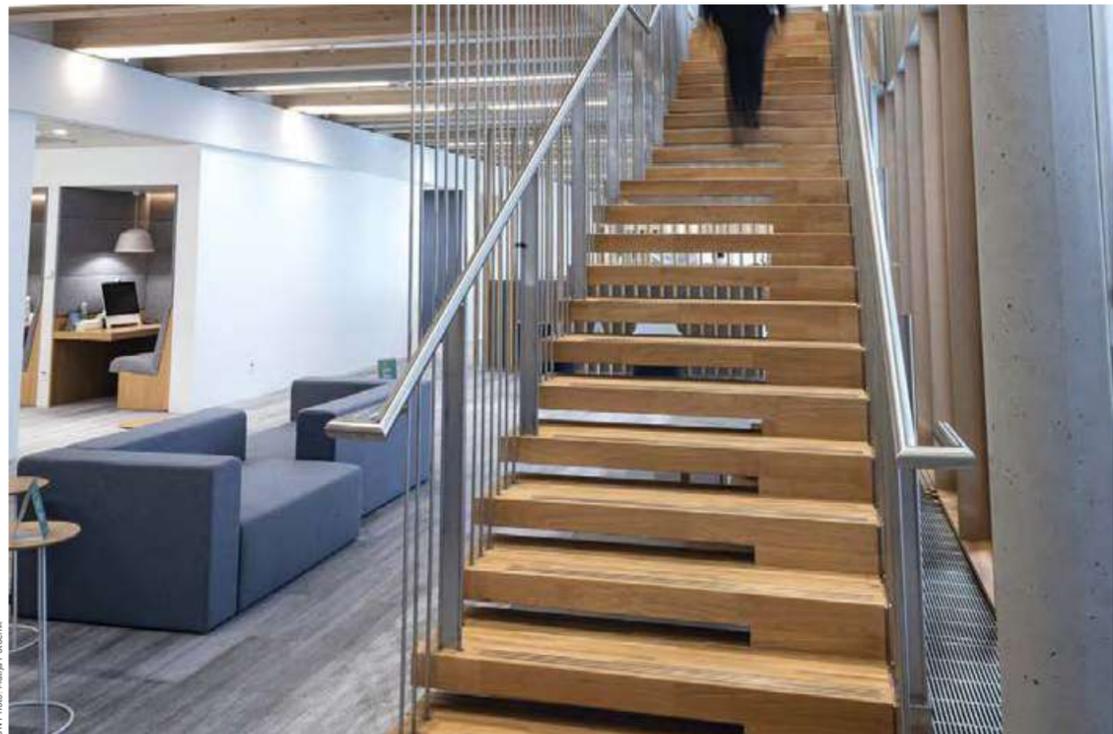
UN Photo: Maja Potocnik

An inner courtyard in Building H



UN Photo: Maja Potocnik

Staff working in the new Building H



UN Photo: Maja Potocnik

A feature staircase in Building H



UN Photo: Maja Potocnik

Building H includes a range of spaces where staff can work or meet.

Improving accessibility for persons with disabilities

Accessibility for persons with disabilities has been fully integrated into the Strategic Heritage Plan, including into the design of Building H, consistent with the [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#).

Early in the planning and development of the Strategic Heritage Plan project, an accessibility masterplan that took into consideration all different types of disabilities was established. Recommendations from accessibility audits have been and continue to be implemented throughout the various design stages for both the new and the existing buildings. As a result, Building H has automatic doors, wide corridors, adjustable desks and fully accessible toilet facilities. Guiding strips feature throughout the building, and buttons are located at an appropriate height in the lifts. Many of these accessibility features are also being put in place as part of the renovation of the historic buildings of the Palais des Nations, and have been included in the design and construction of Tempus, the temporary conference facility.



UN Photo: Marija Polczak

A network of guiding strips on the floors helps to make Building H more accessible to persons with disabilities.

Security and safety in Building H

Moving hundreds of staff into a new building is not only a major logistical undertaking, it also requires important information about health and safety to be shared. As well as UN Geneva's expertly trained security personnel, its volunteer emergency wardens and the staff who work in the newly inaugurated Building H needed to be made aware of security procedures and evacuation routes.

UN Geneva's Security and Safety Service gave a series of safety briefings to staff, which included guided walk-throughs. Staff were shown or informed about the emergency procedures, signage, escape routes, locations of extinguishers, and audio alerts, as well as systems deployed during an emergency such as sprinklers and fire shutters. Dedicated online training was provided for emergency wardens.

In addition, the Security and Safety Service conducted a full emergency evacuation of the building. The successful exercise had all occupants evacuated and accounted for in just under 20 minutes. The evacuation protocols operated according to plan, thanks to the positive input by Security and Safety Service personnel and 11 emergency wardens, and the cooperation of all staff members present. Everything learned during the exercise was noted and subsequently addressed.



UN Photo: Chris De Saette

UN Geneva Security and Safety Service staff attend a briefing in the new Building H.

Visitors' Service guided tours of the new Building H

Ahead of their move into Building H, staff were invited to take a guided tour of the new building, as part of a collaboration between the Strategic Heritage Plan team and the UN Geneva Visitors' Service.

The tours took staff through the building and the outside spaces, concentrating on the design features and the new types of workspace offered, which include collaboration spaces and formal and informal meeting rooms, as well as on facilities such as the pantries and the Grab and Go self-service café.

Between May and July, 51 tours were run for staff. UN Geneva's guides also led nine protocol tours, including the tours given for the building's inauguration on 1 November, for a total of 343 people. The tour guides proved invaluable in sharing their knowledge with the building's new occupants, and were also able to enhance their own knowledge of the building and the Strategic Heritage Plan project.



Staff take part in a guided tour of Building H.

Large-scale moves and new workplaces

Between January and June, staff at the Palais des Nations were on the move. As buildings closed sequentially to enable the renovation works that are part of the Strategic Heritage Plan, staff were relocated to swing spaces and permanent spaces throughout the campus. Most significant was the move of more than 1,200 staff into the newly constructed Building H.

These large-scale moves presented challenges on a number of fronts, most notably due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on construction and renovation timelines and on pre-move preparations. Moreover, staff faced an adjustment from mostly enclosed offices to open spaces and a flexible working environment in Building H.

How were these challenges addressed? With the help of the Strategic Heritage Plan team and of the newly created transition team, whose mandate included assistance and support for staff and coordination among UN Geneva services, to ensure that the moves and transition to new workplaces went smoothly.

Furthermore, the creation of a network of transition coordinators – focal points from each entity – proved invaluable. This group of approximately 100 staff members were crucial in making sure that important communications were passed on to their colleagues. They were also instrumental in providing feedback to the Strategic Heritage Plan team and the transition team to head off potential issues and to allow creative and innovative solutions to be found. The transition coordinator network will remain essential throughout the next phases of implementation of the Strategic Heritage Plan, which involve the move of staff from Building E and, in late 2024, from the two locations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Building H within the Palais des Nations complex.



Staff during the move to Building H

Fifth Committee of the General Assembly makes a virtual visit to UN Geneva

Accountability and oversight are an important part of ensuring the effectiveness of the United Nations and multilateralism. Every other year, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly – which considers administrative and budgetary questions – is invited to visit UN Geneva. This visit is principally to provide the Committee with additional first-hand information on the Strategic Heritage Plan project, particularly through tours of the renovation and construction projects.

Given the challenges around COVID-19 restrictions and international travel in 2021, the members of the Fifth Committee were unable to visit the Palais des Nations in person this year. UN Geneva had to find a creative alternative to a physical walk-through of our buildings: a “virtual visit” was designed.

While remote participation in meetings is a well-established practice now at UN Geneva, the virtual visit was a first. But how

could an online experience be created that would offer the same benefits and information as walking through a building?

To meet this challenge, the Strategic Heritage Plan team and the Division of Conference Management developed a virtual tour of the Palais des Nations renovation works. This nearly 30-minute video, which was narrated live by experts, provided the Committee with detailed information on activity and progress. It even went further than a normal visit, for example providing footage of asbestos removal, which for safety reasons it would not have been possible to see in person.

Also as part of the virtual visit, the Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, and the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Isabelle Durant, held a panel discussion on innovation in Geneva.



Strategic Heritage Plan experts answer questions as part of the virtual visit.

Sustained COVID-19 response enables multilateral diplomacy to continue at UN Geneva

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to reverberate around the world in 2021. The situation called for a sustained response to ensure that multilateral diplomacy at UN Geneva could continue.

After a period of lockdown at the beginning of the year that necessitated telecommuting by UN Geneva staff and limited physical presence at meetings, Switzerland gradually began loosening some restrictions in March. It wasn't until July, however, that increased vaccination rates and an improved epidemiological situation allowed for a certain number of in-person meetings to resume and for more UN personnel to return to the office – with strict safety measures in place, such as physical distancing, mask-wearing and contact tracing procedures. Unfortunately, a deteriorating COVID situation at the end of 2021 once again required most UN Geneva staff to return to full-time telecommuting.

Throughout this turbulent time, UN Geneva worked to ensure the continuity of its core services and support for multilateralism while maintaining regular communication with its personnel, international organizations, Member States, non-governmental organizations, journalists, and other stakeholders. UN Geneva also offered resources to support the health and well-being of staff and managers, and enhanced the professional development opportunities available to them.

During the informal 5+1 talks on Cyprus in April, maintenance staff cleaned the armchairs, tables and microphones after each meeting.



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferret



UN Photo: Maud Nuzil Graud

Signage in the new Building H indicates meeting rooms' maximum occupancy, as part of the COVID-19 protective measures.

Inter-agency collaboration

UN Geneva has a leadership and convening role among UN entities in Geneva that has become all the more critical throughout the COVID-19 response.

One important mechanism for ensuring the safety and security of UN personnel in Switzerland is the Security Management Team. As Designated Official for Switzerland, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya chaired regular meetings of the Security Management Team throughout 2021, supported by her COVID-19 coordination team. The meetings brought together leaders and key officials of more than 40 UN system entities in Switzerland, and of non-UN organizations with observer status such as the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the European Broadcasting Union, as well as representatives of Switzerland and France.

UN Geneva also coordinated meetings of the security, human resources, medical and communications networks that cooperate across UN system and other organizations in Geneva. As the epidemiological situation continued to evolve throughout 2021, these meetings proved essential for the organizations to collectively discuss and adjust their COVID-19 response.

Technology and cooperation

Cooperation within International Geneva led to the refinement and sharing of a web-based tool to assess the risk of aerosol transmission of COVID-19. CERN developed the [COVID Airborne Risk Assessment](#) tool and generously provided UN Geneva with access to it for use at the Palais des Nations. The tool assesses indoor spaces based on a range of key indicators, such as the number of people in a room, the type of space it is, the type of ventilation and the wearing of masks, to provide a measurement of the risk of aerosol transmission. This information can be used to help inform health and safety measures.

All spaces at UN Geneva – especially the new Building H – performed highly in the assessments with protective measures in place. In its convening role, UN Geneva established an inter-agency technical working group to coordinate access to the COVID Airborne Risk Assessment tool. Since then, an international group of experts has been set up by the World Health Organization to standardize the approach to airborne risk assessment for respiratory pathogens using such tools as the COVID Airborne Risk Assessment.

COVID-19 vaccination

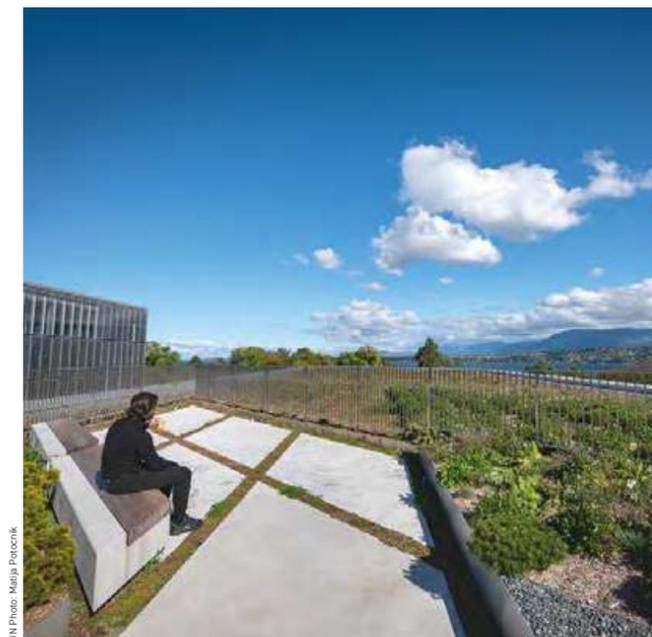
UN Geneva engaged with the authorities in Switzerland and France to ensure that UN personnel and their families would be included in the national vaccination roll-outs; both Governments provided free vaccines to their entire local populations, including our staff. As one of the key tools in the fight against the pandemic and to protect health, COVID-19 vaccination was actively promoted to all UN personnel. To ensure that UN Geneva had data for appropriate risk management, staff were also required to report their vaccination status through a confidential reporting platform.

Supporting staff mental health and well-being

An organization can only be as strong and effective as the people who work in it, and supporting the mental health and well-being of UN personnel is therefore always a priority at UN Geneva. The Staff Counsellor's Office plays a critical role in this effort and has been working to respond to an increased need for psychological support during the pandemic.

The Staff Counsellor's Office has focused especially on preventing mental health issues, through services such as individual psychosocial support, informational webinars, online mindfulness meditation sessions and team coaching. Many of the top concerns from personnel this year seemed to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 experience, and included anxiety, depression, family concerns and a need to prevent burnout.

The Staff Counsellor's Office cooperates closely with members of UN Geneva's working group on staff well-being and mental health, which includes the Human Resources Management Service, the Medical Service, the Staff Coordinating Council, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the focal points for gender and disability inclusion. This working group monitors the overall well-being of the colleagues that it serves, discussing any concerns and planning actions to improve the experience of staff.



UN Photo: Matija Potocnik

A UN Geneva staff member takes a break on a rooftop garden of Building H.

Conferencing adapts to the challenges of COVID-19

UN Geneva has continued to adjust its meeting protocols to align with protective measures in force in Switzerland, for example by requiring face masks throughout the Palais des Nations, introducing 1.5 metre physical distancing in conference rooms, and investing in additional resources and equipment to increase its remote interpretation and web broadcast capabilities.

In June, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya held a briefing with permanent missions in Geneva to update Member States on the status of conferencing and in-person meetings.

In 2021, all told, UN Geneva organized 5,298 meetings, providing 41% of them with interpretation services. Its translators also kept pace with a demanding workload, processing 70,543,915 words.



Scan the QR code to listen to a recording of the Director-General's [briefing for Member States](#).

This year, UN Geneva also launched a campaign to address the issue of poor sound quality in remote meetings, which can significantly hinder the ability of interpreters to understand and convey participants' messages. The campaign comprises a wealth of resources and best practices on how to achieve quality sound, such as videos and infographics.



Scan the QR code to find out how you can improve sound quality when you [participate in meetings remotely](#).



UN Photo: Vidiana Merris

Interpreters work behind the scenes in physically distanced booths at the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan, held on 13 September at UN Geneva.

Adapting our conferencing strategy to better serve stakeholders' needs

UN Geneva is committed to supporting conferences and improving the services it provides. The Conferencing Today and Tomorrow initiative was first launched by UN Geneva's [Division of Conference Management](#) in 2018 to analyse how major external trends – economic, technological, social and environmental – as well as internal trends within the UN, may lead to changes in clients' conferencing support needs. Using a four-track methodology, the Division made important findings in such areas as registration and security, interpretation, room layouts, and accessibility, among many others.

In 2021, Conferencing Today and Tomorrow entered [phase 2](#). The Division of Conference Management collected and analysed feedback from stakeholders to better understand how COVID-19 has changed their ways of participating in conferences, the major challenges and opportunities of hybrid and remote meetings, and how stakeholders envision future meeting experiences in the post-COVID recovery.



UN Photo: Lai Sanders

Banners installed around the Palais des Nations invite people to complete a survey about conferencing.

Virtually and in person: global leaders at UN Geneva

The participation and contribution of global leaders is an important part of international cooperation. As a centre for modern multilateralism, UN Geneva welcomes a range of eminent visitors from Member States, international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector every year. In 2021 some were able to come to Geneva, while at times COVID-19 restrictions made it difficult to attend meetings in person; however, the infrastructure and support provided by UN Geneva ensured that they could still contribute virtually to multilateral diplomacy.



The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Sophie Wilmès, addresses the high-level segment of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council by video link, on 22 February.

UN Photo: Volaine Martin



The Prime Minister of Fiji, Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, addresses the high-level segment of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council by video link, on 22 February.

UN Photo: Volaine Martin



The President of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez, addresses the high-level segment of the 46th session of the Human Rights Council by video link, on 22 February.

UN Photo: Volaine Martin



The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Linde, addresses the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament by video link, on 22 February.



The Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya (second from left), meets with the President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid (third from right), on 8 June.



The Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, meets with the Secretary-General of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, Mohamed Mahmoud Abdelsalam, on 20 May.



The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres (second from left), meets with the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades (left), the Turkish Cypriot leader, Ersin Tatar (third from left), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Nikos Dendias (third from right), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (second from right), and the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Dominic Raab (right), during the informal 5+1 meeting on Cyprus, on 28 April.



The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed (centre), arrives at a meeting room at the Palais des Nations for a UN Geneva Executive Briefing held on 29 November.



The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres (right), the Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya (left), and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths (second

from left), meet with the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Ignazio Cassis (second from right), ahead of the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan, on 13 September.



UN Photo: Volaine Martin

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, opens the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan, on 13 September.



UN Photo: Volaine Martin

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas, attends the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan, on 13 September.



UN Photo: Volaine Martin

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Marise Payne, addresses the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan by video link, on 13 September.



UN Photo: Volaine Martin

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, A.K. Abdul Momen, addresses the High-level Ministerial Meeting on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan by video link, on 13 September.



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

The Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Benedetto Della Vedova (left), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet (second from left), and the President of the Human Rights Council, Nazhat Shameem Khan (right), during the 48th session of the Council, on 14 September

New access point at the Palais des Nations accreditation pavilion

Every year, UN Geneva welcomes thousands of diplomats, journalists, civil society representatives, visitors and many others through its gates to take part in multilateralism or witness it in action. In 2021, UN Geneva completed the construction of a new access point at the Palais des Nations accreditation pavilion at Pregny Gate, despite the supply chain challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new access point was designed to increase the efficiency of security procedures for visitors and conference participants, to provide accessibility for persons with mobility impairments and to ensure the security and safety of staff operating the post. Security "layers" are fundamental to the design of the area, preventing possible security breaches and providing the capability to lock down if needed. The opening hours of the access point are flexible and based on operational needs.



Mock-up of the registration area at the new access point



UN Photo: Yoanna Martin

The Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, welcomes the President of Viet Nam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, to the Palais des Nations on 28 November.

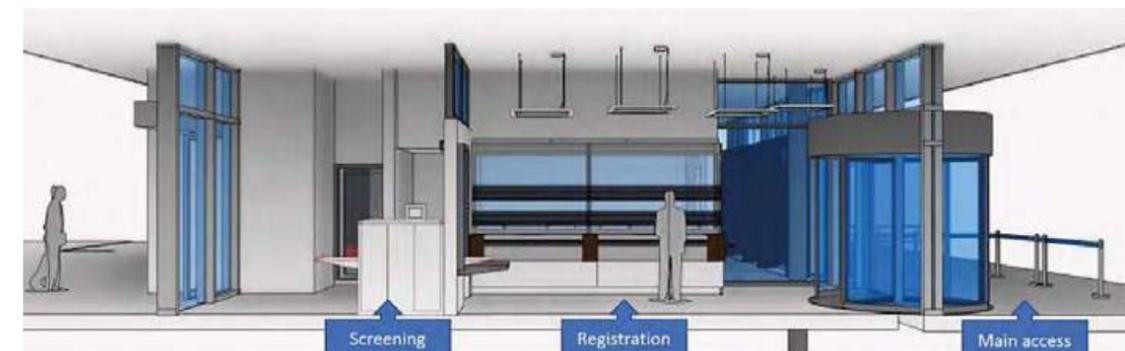


Diagram of the new access point

Safety, inclusion and progress at COP 26

The 2021 [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#), also known as COP 26, represented the UN's most ambitious effort to bring together cross-sector stakeholders for international dialogue since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference took place in Glasgow, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, from 31 October to 13 November. Despite the immense challenges posed by travel restrictions, COP 26 broke records as the largest Conference of the Parties to date, with over 58,000 registrations, more than 38,000 badges issued on site, and 3,000 virtual badges generated.

UN Geneva took a leading role in equipping the conference with multilingual services, providing 50 out of the total of 62 interpreters and translators dispatched by the UN to Glasgow. While interpreters worked on site to render spoken English into the other five official UN languages, translators worked remotely from Geneva to translate all the official documentation for the conference.

Strict physical distancing protocols, daily testing requirements for all staff and participants, an increase in event livestreaming capabilities and the digitalization of document distribution processes ensured a safe, inclusive and meaningful COP 26 – resulting in the signing of the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#).



UN Photo: Jonathan Morgan

An interpreter works in a physically distanced booth at COP 26.

Sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Adopted in 1980, the [Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#) continues to evolve and progress through the addition of new protocols and by broadening its scope of application. This flexibility has allowed the Convention to continuously contribute to the development and codification of new rules and norms of international humanitarian law.

In 2021, the sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention was held at UN Geneva, from 13 to 17 December, under the Presidency of France. It provided an opportunity for the international community to continue exploring how to respond to emerging challenges in addressing and furthering international rules relating to the development and use of conventional weapons.

Against this backdrop, the Review Conference decided that the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems should continue its important work to strengthen the Convention.

The Review Conference also acknowledged that the substantive work on improvised explosive devices carried out in the framework of the Convention had contributed to raising awareness of the worldwide threat posed by such weapons. It further recognized the importance of a balanced involvement of women and men in the meetings under the Convention and its Protocols.

The next Review Conference is scheduled to take place in 2026.



UN Photo: Sophie Guillermé-Galet

The sixth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, at the Palais des Nations

What is the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons?

The [Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects](#), known generally as the [Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#), seeks to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause excessive injury or unnecessary suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately.



Scan the QR code to find out more about the Convention.

Working towards the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, more widely known as the [Biological Weapons Convention](#), was the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It has reached almost universal adherence, with only 14 States, mostly in Africa and the Pacific region, still outside its scope. To encourage the remaining States to join, the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs convened a [virtual regional workshop for African States](#) in March – a cooperative endeavour between its Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit and the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

Combining expert presentations and testimonies from key officials, the workshop was tailored to build understanding about the Convention's provisions, and spotlighted ways in which the treaty would have a concrete impact in the African context. Senior officials of the three Biological Weapons Convention depositary Governments – the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America – encouraged the participating States to join the Convention via [video messages](#). The workshop was organized in the framework of [Council of the European Union Decision 2019/97](#), in support of the Convention.



Scan the QR code to learn more about [biological weapons](#).



Talkmore Maruta, Senior Biosafety and Biosecurity Officer at the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, discusses the role of the Centres in supporting the universalization of the Convention in Africa, during the virtual workshop.

The participation and role of women in international security: perspectives from the Conference on Disarmament

“Today, women's leadership is a cause. Tomorrow, it must be the norm. We can no longer exclude one half of humanity from international peace and security.”

Secretary-General António Guterres at the Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security on 21 October

On 26 August, the Presidency of Chile held a plenary meeting of the Geneva-based [Conference on Disarmament](#) dedicated to the participation and role of women in international security. At the meeting, States noted that the discourse on women and security must move past victim-centric narratives and instead acknowledge the contribution of women in conflict prevention and resolution and in peacebuilding, as well as the critical role that women play in sustaining peace.

The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, emphasized that ensuring the full and effective participation of women is not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do – and a critical step for effective and sustainable disarmament.

Though strides have been made in integrating gender perspectives into disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control processes, States expressed a desire for a more systematic approach to integrating gender perspectives. They also called for more opportunities to further discuss how to meaningfully enable the full and effective participation of women, and to continue the consideration of the gendered impact of weapons beyond the Conference on Disarmament.



The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, delivers remarks by video message to the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, chaired by Chile and with the presence of the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Tatiana Valovaya. The meeting was dedicated to the participation and role of women in international security.

Promoting the inclusion of youth perspectives in multilateral disarmament processes: International Youth Day in the Conference on Disarmament

In his [Agenda for Disarmament](#), United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres underscores the tremendous force that young people have to bring about change. Youth have historically played a key role in successful disarmament campaigns, such as relating to landmines, cluster munitions and nuclear weapons. They are also often the first to embrace new and innovative ways to interact, organize and mobilize, and advance bold solutions for the future.

In recognition of the valuable contribution of young people to sustainable peace and security, the Presidency of Canada of the [Conference on Disarmament](#) convened a formal plenary meeting dedicated to youth and disarmament, on [International Youth Day](#), 12 August. At the plenary, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, four United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament and youth representatives from Conference on Disarmament member States called upon States to meaningfully engage in empowering young and diverse voices in disarmament discussions.

The United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament, who are aged between 18 and 24 and come from countries across the globe, have received training in the general principles of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, as part of a year-long programme convened by the [United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs](#) and its [#Youth4Disarmament](#) outreach initiative, with financial support from Germany.

In front of the Geneva disarmament community, they stressed that the young generation, "either as victims of war or as beneficiaries of peace", is ready and eager to contribute to debates, and highlighted their unique ability in using the transformative force of social media, leveraging grass-roots movements and ensuring linkages to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).



United Nations Youth Champions for Disarmament address the Conference at its plenary meeting on youth and disarmament.

Youth for Biosecurity Initiative

The Geneva Branch of the [United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs](#) hosted the second [Biosecurity Diplomacy Workshop for Young Scientists from the Global South](#), virtually, from January to March. The event, better known as the Youth for Biosecurity Initiative, is part of the implementation of [Council of the European Union Decision 2019/97](#) in support of the [Biological Weapons Convention](#). It brought together [29 young scientists](#) from 17 countries in the Global South.

The main objectives of this interactive training were to provide the young scientists with an insight into multilateral diplomacy related to the Biological Weapons Convention. The training also provided them with an opportunity to reflect on their role as scientists in ensuring that biological agents are only used for peaceful purposes. The [#Youth4biosec](#) cohort remained engaged throughout the year, including during the [official meetings under the Biological Weapons Convention](#). With a view to the ninth

Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, scheduled for August 2022, the Youth for Biosecurity Initiative has developed partnerships with civil society organizations to ensure that young scientists have a seat at the table of global biosecurity diplomacy.



Scan the QR code to hear more about [the young scientists' experiences](#).



Participants in an online discussion during the second Biosecurity Diplomacy Workshop for Young Scientists from the Global South

CyberMediation Network: embracing the potential of digital technologies for mediation

Peaceful resolution of armed conflicts through mediation and good offices remains a human-centred endeavour, where in-person interaction is an essential ingredient for success. At the same time, digital technologies are transforming not just our life and our work, but also the dynamics of politics and conflict, and peace diplomacy is not immune to technological innovation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, several mediation and dialogue processes have made intense use of digital technologies to overcome obstacles to travelling and in-person meetings. The benefits and efficiencies generated by the use of digital technologies in mediation have become apparent. At the same time, mediators have had to deal with a new set of risks that these technologies pose to peace processes. As the world gradually moves to a "new normal", technological innovations should be fully integrated into peace processes and mediation techniques, and new hybrid models of mediation, combining traditional and technology-based formats, are expected to emerge.

Against this backdrop, the CyberMediation Network has explored the area of digital peacemaking to find innovative solutions for facilitating online meetings, and for building trust between parties

to conflicts, both online and offline. The [Mediation Support Unit](#) of the UN's [Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs](#) and UN Geneva have facilitated the work of the CyberMediation Network since its inception in 2019.

During 2021, the CyberMediation Network developed several partnerships and joint projects on topics such as digital risk management, inclusion, social media in peace mediation, and digital process design and facilitation. Some examples:

In May, the Mediation Support Unit teamed up with [Build Up](#), the [Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue](#) and [Tandemic](#) to develop a self-paced course titled [Digital Process Design and Facilitation for](#)

[Mediation](#), which collates emerging good practices that can help peace negotiators design and deliver mediation activities, using online platforms and tools.

In June, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and [swisspeace](#) published a policy brief on [social media in peace mediation](#), which explored the use of social media in peace processes and provided practical recommendations to mediators on the potential benefits and risks of using social media.

In December, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, CMI – [Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation](#) and the [CyberPeace Institute](#) opened the [E-learning Platform on Cyber Hygiene and Digital Risk Management for Mediators](#). This interactive platform aims to help mediators and practitioners to build their awareness of digital risks and their capacity to manage them.

International Law Commission reconvenes

The seventy-second session of the [International Law Commission](#), postponed in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, took place at UN Geneva in 2021 over a period of 11 weeks, from 26 April to 4 June and from 5 July to 6 August. It was held in hybrid format, allowing the Commission's 34 members, drawn from all five regional groups of the United Nations, to participate either in person or online.

Despite the challenging circumstances under which the session was held, the Commission was able to make progress in its work, which included completing two major texts, on protection of the atmosphere and the provisional application of treaties.

What is the International Law Commission?

The International Law Commission was established by the General Assembly in 1947 to undertake the Assembly's mandate under article 13 (1) (a) of the Charter of the United Nations to "initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of ... encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification". The Commission's members are elected by the General Assembly to serve in their individual capacity for a term of five years.



The International Law Commission elected its first female Chair of the Drafting Committee, Patrícia Galvão Teles, at its seventy-second session.



The International Law Commission held its seventy-second session in hybrid format.



In 2021, the International Law Commission considered the second report of the Special Rapporteur on General Principles of Law, Marcelo Vázquez-Bermúdez (left).

The return of Executive Briefings

After a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Geneva's Executive Briefings series resumed in 2021. Six Executive Briefings were held – three in person and three in a hybrid format – with an average participation of 45 delegations per briefing.

The Executive Briefings, introduced in 2012, are a forum for senior officials of the UN and its partners to engage with the international community in Geneva on a range of key issues. In 2021, speakers briefed the international community on topics such as sustainable development, the repositioning of the UN development system, pandemic response and recovery in the context of urban development, and the rule of law.

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (left) briefs more than 70 delegations. The Executive Briefing of 29 November was held in a hybrid format.



UN Photo: Matija Potocnik

Multilateral cooperation through intercultural and interreligious dialogue

Despite persistent challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, UN Geneva continued this year to actively promote multilateral dialogue between representatives of various faiths and cultures. As the General Assembly marked International Year of Peace and Trust in 2021, enhanced engagement with faith-based groups and other religious actors provided a timely opportunity to promote principles shared across the world's major religions, including peace, solidarity and tolerance.

Several virtual and hybrid events were organized in 2021 for Geneva-based diplomatic and religious communities to observe sacred days and religious holidays such as Vesak and Nowruz. During such events, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya used her remarks to encourage mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue, which both constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace.

In April, the Director-General took part in the High-level Event on Fraternity, Multilateralism and Peace organized by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See. The participants recognized the valuable role that religion plays in both preventing and resolving conflicts. They also reaffirmed the need to encourage interreligious dialogue, which could pave the way for improved understanding of our shared values, and enhance peace, social stability and respect for diversity.

Furthermore, with the support of UN Geneva, the Geneva office of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations officially opened its doors on 8 November at the Palais des Nations in the presence of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain and the Permanent Representative of Turkey, among others. The Alliance of Civilizations is a global platform for intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation. Its Geneva office will further the collaboration between the UN entities, faith actors and many other international and non-governmental organizations based in Geneva.

The Geneva office of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is opened by (from left to right) the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain, José Manuel Albares Bueno; the Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya; the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Miguel Ángel Moratinos; and the Permanent Representative of Turkey, Sadik Arslan.



UN Photo: Alliance of Civilizations



UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya (bottom right) among the participants in the High-level Event on Fraternity, Multilateralism and Peace

A high-level call for peace, diversity and our common humanity

Over 30 world leaders and senior UN personalities exchanged ideas and perspectives at a conference titled "[Peace, Diversity and Our Common Humanity](#)". The event, held at UN Geneva on 4 and 5 October, was aimed at encouraging multilateral cooperation in times of complex global challenges.

Different aspects of the current world landscape were examined, in four cross-cutting panel discussions. Distinguished panellists, including many former Heads of State and Government, provided their unique experiences and valuable inputs on pressing issues such as peace and security, equality, the climate emergency and sustainable development.

"Peace, diversity and our common humanity remain the guiding concepts of United Nations work and continue to be the core values of the United Nations Office at Geneva," said Director-General Tatiana Valovaya at the opening session.

Recognizing the critical role that civil society plays in issues right across the United Nations agenda, UN Geneva collaborates with a vast and diverse network of more than 750 non-governmental organizations. This high-profile event, co-organized by UN Geneva and the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, is one of many examples of the strong partnership between the United Nations and civil society.



Scan the QR code to revisit the high-level "[Peace, Diversity and Our Common Humanity](#)" conference.

Librarians and archivists at your service online, on-site and on demand

In 2021, the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) produced new and customized services and products to support both the research and the practice of multilateralism. The Library's Virtual Service Desk sent 7,400 answers to requests and thousands of scanned pages to users around the globe. Archivists enabled access for 300 researchers to millions of pages of digitized League of Nations content.

Activity returned to the reading rooms: users came back to leaf through newspapers and magazines, carry out research using physical and online resources, or browse the new special displays of books and digital materials on topics such as human rights, diplomacy or artificial intelligence. Library and [Museum](#) visits also resumed in October.

For the [International Law Commission's](#) 72nd session, which was conducted in a hybrid format, the Library provided a customized package of services. It included reserved spaces in the Library for Commission members to carry out their research, easy digital access for those taking part online, a dedicated research assistance service via live chat, and a tailored online research guide and bibliographies covering all topics on the agenda of the session.

The newspapers and magazines corner of the UN Library and Archives Geneva



Photo: Nizami Ganjavi International Center

Some of the speakers at the "Peace, Diversity and Our Common Humanity" event organized by UN Geneva and the Nizami Ganjavi International Center



UN Photo: Carla Bellota

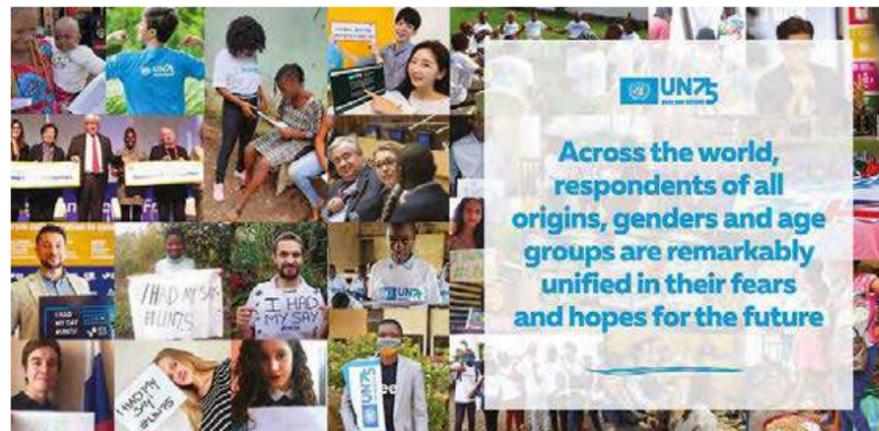
UN75: The Future We Want, the United Nations We Need – final report launched at UN Geneva

In January 2020, the United Nations launched a global consultation to mark its 75th anniversary. Through surveys and dialogues held around the world, the UN asked people about their hopes and fears for the future. It was the largest stocktake to date of people’s perceptions about international cooperation and what they think should be prioritized. Over 1.5 million people from all countries and all walks of life took part in this “largest global conversation ever”.

The Future We Want, the United Nations We Need – the final report presenting the results of this global exercise – was launched at UN Geneva on 8 January 2021. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the United Nations’ 75th Anniversary, Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond, announced the key findings to the press corps at UN Geneva at a press briefing and gave interviews for our English-language and French-language podcasts. The launch also included an outreach campaign across UN social media accounts.



People from around the world had their say as part of the UN75 global consultation.



People who responded to the UN75 global consultation shared their hopes and dreams for the future of international cooperation.

Reaffirming the values of the Charter of the United Nations

This year, the Director-General, Tatiana Valovaya, celebrated the anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations by inviting all Permanent Representatives of Member States to symbolically renew their collective commitment to the Charter and to multilateralism. Between the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace on 24 April and United Nations Day on 24 October, Permanent Representatives visited the UN Library and Archives Geneva to sign a large poster featuring the text of the Charter.

Permanent Representatives also received a copy of the photo book *100*, published by UN Geneva, which illustrates the role of Geneva in supporting multilateralism and diplomacy for peace. The book marks 100 years of multilateralism in Geneva by spotlighting 100 events, objects, documents and personalities that have contributed to the development of multilateralism in the city, from the creation of the League of Nations to the United Nations today.



Scan the QR code to watch a video about this initiative.



UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya in front of the United Nations Charter poster that features the signatures of a range of Permanent Representatives



The Permanent Representative of Namibia, Julia Imene-Chanduru, signs the United Nations Charter poster.

Projecting multilateral diplomacy to the world

UNTV Geneva provides live broadcast content to news agencies as well as via the [European Broadcasting Union](#). It also distributes edited content with storylines through a variety of portals, including the UN Geneva multimedia newsroom and [UNifeed](#), a central platform for storing and sharing UN audiovisual material from around the world. UNTV Geneva produced almost 500 TV news stories in 2021; in February, through UNifeed alone, 187 broadcasters made use of 48 UNTV Geneva stories 1,621 times – an all-time record for a single month.

Throughout the pandemic, UNTV services also ensured business continuity for hundreds of hybrid press conferences featuring the Geneva-based UN agencies, funds and programmes.

The role of UN Web TV in enabling people to participate in and to monitor meetings at UN Geneva became more and more important during the pandemic. For example, through live webcast services, Libyan citizens were able to follow the [Libyan Political Dialogue Forum](#), at which their interim Prime Minister and President were selected. In 2021, UN Web TV in Geneva livestreamed close to 900 events. For the 46th session of the Human Rights Council, in February and March, more than 330,000 people from every country in the world tuned in to follow the proceedings via UN Web TV.

In 2021, UN Geneva’s Information Service produced a total of 1,200 news stories in French and English across the mediums of text, radio and television, as well as more than 2,000 official photos.

Scan the QR code to access the Information Service’s [interview](#) with Zarifa Ghafari, an Afghan activist attending events at the UN in Geneva, which had more than 7,200 plays and some 150 downloads on [UN News](#).



UN Geneva produces coverage at the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum.



Live webcasting by UNTV of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum



UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya is interviewed in the UNTV studio for United Nations Day.

Multi-what? A short guide to multilateralism and its impact on our daily lives

What is multilateralism? What impact does it have on our lives? Initiated by UN Geneva's Perception Change Project and produced in collaboration with the UN Library and Archives Geneva, the *Multi-what?* booklet – and its accompanying social media campaign – aims to answer commonly asked questions about multilateralism and broaden the public's understanding of this complex and sometimes misunderstood concept.

Multi-what? explores the origins and evolution of multilateralism, and shows how multilateral cooperation around the world shapes and enhances our daily lives. It also highlights the role of Geneva as a hub for multilateral cooperation.

The publication is available both in printed form and online, in English and French.

Scan the QR code to access the *Multi-what?* website.



English version



French version



UN Photo: Niccolò Ventura

The *Multi-what?* publication, in English and French

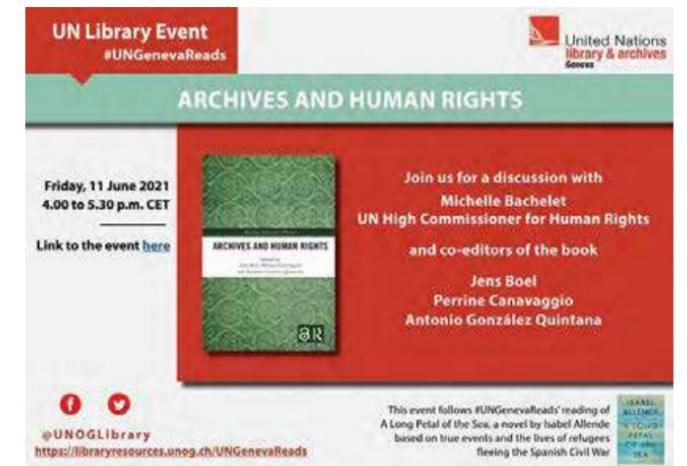
Archives and human rights

What is the relationship between archives and human rights? What if archives were not only a tool for looking backwards but also a powerful means to build a better future? How can archives and archivists contribute to stronger multilateralism? These were the key themes at an interactive event held virtually in June by UN Geneva for International Archives Week.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the editors of the book *Human Rights and Archives*, spoke at the event. They emphasized the importance of archives in shedding light on human rights violations and in supporting truth and reconciliation processes. They also discussed the relevance of archivists, who play an important role in determining authenticity, preserving institutional memory and facilitating access to information, especially in the face of fake news. Finally, the discussion explored the changes and opportunities provided by new technologies.



Scan the QR code to watch the event.



The flyer for the "Archives and Human Rights" event

2

Chapter two

A centre for sustainability



Sustainability at the heart of Building H

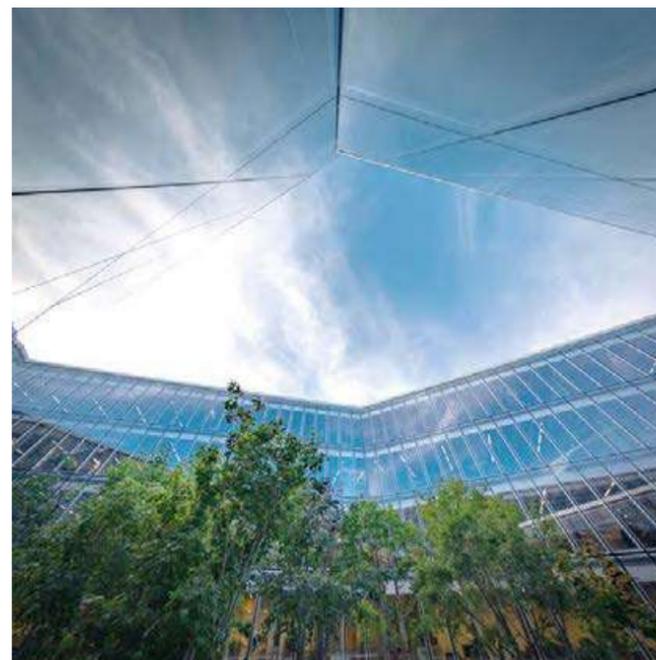
Sustainability is at the heart of the UN Geneva agenda and is factored into everything we do. It is therefore no surprise that sustainability is at the forefront of the [Strategic Heritage Plan](#) project, which includes the new Building H.

The state-of-the-art Building H has been designed as a healthy and efficient office building that is fully aligned with the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). It features cutting-edge systems and energy-saving measures to meet the internationally recognized [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#) Gold Standard for “green” buildings. These measures include:

- Solar panels mounted on the roof
- A glass façade that takes advantage of natural light
- The use of thermal energy from the water in Lake Geneva to cool the building
- A “green roof” to reduce the excess heat generated by a traditional building
- Concrete floors that store energy, which assist with heating and cooling
- An automated building management system that monitors, controls and adjusts the lighting, temperature and blinds using advanced predictive algorithms

Building H features a glass façade to make optimum use of natural light.

Sustainability efforts like these are also part of UN Geneva’s contribution to the [United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan 2020–2030](#), which aims to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of UN operations and increase the use of renewable energy sources, and to the [Greening the Blue](#) initiative, which seeks to transition the UN system towards greater environmental sustainability in the management of its facilities and operations.



UN Photo: Marija Potocnik

UN Geneva contributes to sustainable transport in Geneva

Responding to a call from the host country, Switzerland, UN Geneva will contribute to an upcoming major upgrade to the railway network in Geneva. Through the [Léman 2030](#) project, UN Geneva will help to improve green mobility into and out of the city.

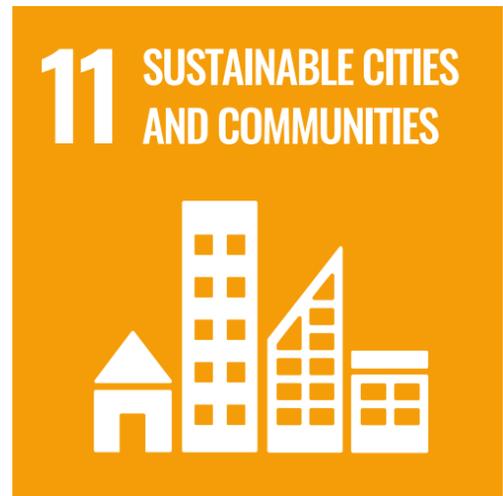
To enable this project, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya has signed agreements with the City of Geneva and the Swiss Federal Railways, allowing for a small strip of Ariana Park – the home of the Palais des Nations – to be returned to the City of Geneva. Much of Ariana Park is actually owned by the City of Geneva, with UN Geneva having the right to use the land.

A tunnel will be constructed by the Swiss Federal Railways underneath the portion of land that is to be returned, enabling the laying of [new underground tracks into Geneva’s Cornavin station](#).

These agreements are an example of UN Geneva’s commitment to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), specifically [Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities](#) which urges investments in sustainable transport.



Wondering what the Léman 2030 projects are? Scan the QR code to watch a short [video](#).



Accelerating the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem

On 28 January, UN Geneva's [SDG Lab](#) and the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) launched [ACCELERATE](#), an initiative of the [Geneva 2030 Ecosystem](#) to mobilize Geneva-based actors working to make the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) a reality. Strategies were introduced to give fresh impetus to the Ecosystem, such as a pilot microgrant programme to support collaborative projects that place the Goals at the centre of COVID-19 recovery, and a monthly series profiling the people behind the Ecosystem. The virtual launch was opened by UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya and was attended by nearly 100 Ecosystem members.

Also in 2021, the SDG Lab and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, as co-conveners of the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem, introduced new formats for connecting the Ecosystem community around themes of common interest to accelerate implementation of the Goals. These themes include data, digitalization and connectivity, as well as sustainable finance, which is the aim of [Building Bridges Week](#).



Members of the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem take part in a virtual meeting.

Building Bridges and unlocking investment in sustainable development

[Building Bridges Week](#), which aims to create an international movement for sustainable finance, was inaugurated in 2019. UN Geneva, through its [SDG Lab](#), was instrumental in establishing this first-of-its-kind initiative in Switzerland.

After an absence in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, [Building Bridges Week](#) returned to Geneva from 29 November to 2 December 2021. [This year's programme](#) featured nearly 80 events that were attended by a diverse cross section of [Sustainable Development Goals](#) actors from the worlds of business, finance, international development, academia and civil society, who were all focused on learning, exchanging, promoting and pitching the latest developments in Sustainable Development Goals financing and investment.

The Summit, a one-day high-level event, opened [Building Bridges Week](#). UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed delivered an agenda-setting [keynote address](#), in which she described the world as being "at a breakdown or breakthrough moment" for sustainable development.

Speaking alongside the Deputy Secretary-General was Swiss Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Finance Ueli Maurer, as well as other distinguished guests, who collectively called for greater bridge-building among all Sustainable Development Goals stakeholders.

In the lead-up to and during [Building Bridges Week](#), the SDG Lab and its partner the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) hosted events to build interest and to unpack key themes up for discussion at the event. These included two workshops focusing on data gaps and on challenges in measuring the social dimension of sustainable investment, as well as a country-centred panel discussion on the SDG Lab's [Pipeline Builder](#) pilot project, which aims to streamline the investment origination process to drive more capital to Goals-focused small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries.

"Geneva is uniquely positioned to advance this collaboration and unlock financial resources that would be needed. The birthplace of multilateralism and home to a rich ecosystem of international organizations, civil society actors and a vibrant financial sector, Geneva is the world's hub to build partnerships for the 2030 Agenda."

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed



UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed addresses the Building Bridges Summit.



Experts from various sectors discuss the challenges and opportunities of sustainable finance data collection and use, at a workshop organized by the SDG Lab and the International Institute for Sustainable Development and held during Building Bridges Week.

Unpacking the UN regional forums on sustainable development

Every year, each of the five UN regional economic and social commissions organizes a forum on sustainable development. The aim of these forums is to take stock of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region concerned, to promote the sharing of good practices and challenges and to foster dialogue between countries. The forums' themes are aligned with the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which takes place annually in July and serves as the global pulse-taking event on progress in achieving the Goals.

Whereas in 2020 the forums touched upon the potential risks and challenges of the unfolding global COVID-19 crisis, in 2021 the impacts of the pandemic were at the centre of the discussions. All five forums addressed the question of resilient and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, highlighting the Global Goals as the road map for building greener and better societies and economies.

UN Geneva's SDG Lab, in collaboration with the five regional commissions, captured key messages from the regional forums in a series of short videos. These were widely shared through UN social media networks, allowing the videos – and the messages – to receive tens of thousands of views.



Scan the QR code to watch the videos.



Representatives of the UN, the private sector and the Government of Ghana discuss efforts to boost foreign investment in Ghana's Sustainable Development Goals plan, as part of a hybrid panel discussion on the SDG Lab's Pipeline Builder pilot project held during Building Bridges Week.

Building resilience to COVID-19 and future pandemics: policy brief launch by the SDG Lab and the Geneva Science-Policy Interface

How can the international community enhance its ability to prevent, react to and recover from shocks? This was a key question raised at a virtual [policy brief launch](#) hosted by UN Geneva's [SDG Lab](#) and the [Geneva Science-Policy Interface \(GSPI\)](#). Released on 25 March, the [GSPI policy brief](#) focuses on the benefits of a holistic mindset in governing future pandemics in light of COVID-19, and underscores how strengthening resilience not only improves the world's capacity to withstand future shocks but can also help humanity to attain the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya opened the event, welcoming more than 80 policy practitioners, experts, diplomats and other government representatives. Together, they discussed the policy brief in practical terms, sharing recommendations and tools to help enhance the governance of future pandemics and similar crises, from a sustainable development perspective. The Director-General called for resilience to be at the forefront of governance, in order to better address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Additional insights were provided by speakers from the trade, health and employment sectors.

This was the second such joint initiative between GSPI and the SDG Lab; the first was the launch in January 2020 of the ["Behavioural insights for climate action"](#) policy brief.



Participants in the virtual policy brief launch

Charting the road to recovery: joint SDG Lab–World Bank briefing for permanent missions examines the Africa's Pulse report

UN Geneva's [SDG Lab](#) partnered with the [World Bank Group's Geneva office](#) to hold a [virtual in-depth briefing](#) on 3 February for Geneva-based permanent missions. Participants discussed issues raised in the most recent edition of [Africa's Pulse](#), a twice-yearly report that analyses the near-term macroeconomic outlook for sub-Saharan Africa.

The briefing focused on the impact of COVID-19 on economic activity in the region. It highlighted the role of connectivity and digitalization in helping sub-Saharan Africa to recover from COVID-19 and to accelerate progress towards the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). It provided participants with replicable examples of digital tools to drive new investments in infrastructure, enhance leadership, transparency and governance, and strengthen policy, regulations and legislation. There was also a call to increase fiscal space to avoid erosion of the continent's hard-won sustainable development gains.

The World Bank's Chief Economist for Africa, Albert Zeufack, delivered the briefing, with contributions from the Minister of Digital Economy and Digital Transformation of Togo, Cina Lawson, and the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau at the International Telecommunication Union and SDG Lab Advisory Group member, Doreen Bogdan-Martin. The event was moderated by SDG Lab Director Nadia Isler.



Speakers at the joint SDG Lab–World Bank briefing on *Africa's Pulse*

"COVID-19 has shown us that robust and resilient broadband networks must be considered basic infrastructure, as fundamental to the social and economic health of nations as networks like water, roads or power. Broadband is the catalyst that can dramatically accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals."

Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau at the International Telecommunication Union, Doreen Bogdan-Martin

Geneva Triologue on scaling open innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

On 18 March, the [University of Geneva](#), in collaboration with the [United Nations Institute for Training and Research](#), hosted the third [Geneva Triologue](#) of the [Geneva-Tsinghua Initiative](#), with the theme “Scaling open innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals”. [UN Geneva’s SDG Lab](#) participated in two of the seven thematic panel discussions, which were held virtually.

The first of these focused on the promotion of open innovation in the UN Geneva ecosystem, and analysed the benefits and challenges of scaling up open innovation across international organizations in Geneva. The second event, on blended finance for open innovation, was a deep dive into the use of innovative financial instruments to unlock private finance for the Sustainable Development Goals.

SDG Lab Director Nadia Isler presented the Lab’s work on incentivizing the sharing of knowledge and expertise and co-creating policy solutions between the development and the finance communities to accelerate private capital flow for the Goals, including through initiatives such as [Building Bridges](#) and the [Pipeline Builder](#).



A Geneva Triologue panel discussion on open innovation in the UN Geneva ecosystem

It Takes a Global Crisis: podcast series

In late 2021, the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) and the [SDG Lab](#) teamed up to produce *It Takes a Global Crisis*, a podcast mini-series focused on understanding how a global crisis like COVID-19 affects achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). Experts working at the country level were joined in discussion by their International Geneva peers to create a dual perspective and to exchange their insights.

Produced as part of the Library’s [The Next Page](#) podcast, the series explores how numerous policies and projects for the Sustainable Development Goals accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the urgent social, health and economic needs that the crisis brought to the fore. As the series uncovered, before the pandemic many policies and initiatives aligned to the Goals were talked about often, but rarely implemented.

Additionally, *It Takes a Global Crisis* underscores that the pandemic set back progress on several Goals, notably those on ending poverty and reducing hunger, and exposed fragilities and vast socioeconomic divides in all countries, all of this against a backdrop of immense suffering and tragedy on a global scale.

Over its four episodes, the series explored the role of sustainable cities in managing the pandemic, environmental resilience, advances in social protection, and digitalization and connectivity as levers for a post-COVID world that is better aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.



Scan the QR code to listen to the [podcasts](#).



UN Photo: Tiffany Verga

The Director of the UN Library and Archives Geneva, Francesco Pisano, and the Director of the SDG Lab, Nadia Isler, in discussion during a recording of the *It Takes a Global Crisis* podcast

It's a wrap: season 1 of GO solutions durables ends

GO solutions durables, a television programme by Geneva broadcaster Léman Bleu, concluded its first season in July. Ten episodes were aired, raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and showcasing International Geneva. UN Geneva's Perception Change Project and SDG Lab are founding partners of the series and were instrumental in ensuring that the specificities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the uniqueness of the Geneva ecosystem were at the heart of the programme.

In May, a special two-part episode on implementing the 2030 Agenda and the role of cities was filmed at the Palais des Nations, featuring several notable guests, including UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya, Swiss Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga, World Meteorological Organization Deputy Secretary-General Elena Manaenkova, and representatives of the Canton and City of Geneva. As part of the special segment, two youth reporters from the Geneva-based Eduki Foundation interviewed the Director-General on the Sustainable Development Goals and the future of multilateralism.

As one of the most watched programmes in the history of Léman Bleu, *GO solutions durables* will continue for a second season in 2022, providing viewers with new insights into International Geneva.



Scan the QR code to watch the *GO solutions durables* series.



Photo: Léman Bleu

Youth reporters from the Eduki Foundation interview UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya as part of a special edition of *GO solutions durables*.



Photo: Léman Bleu

The Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room of the Palais des Nations was turned into a temporary television studio in May for a special edition of *GO solutions durables*.

Replicating the SDG Lab model to help achieve the Global Goals

In December, UN Geneva launched the [SDG Lab Learning Journey](#). This online resource passes on the knowledge and skills that the [SDG Lab](#), an initiative centred on realization of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), has built from the ground up. The Learning Journey includes tips, techniques and tools to support all actors – from Governments to civil society organizations to individuals – in accelerating implementation of the Goals in their own communities and contexts.

The SDG Lab Learning Journey had its genesis in requests from Member States, other UN system organizations and non-governmental organizations interested in replicating the SDG Lab model or using some of its methods and approaches. Just as collaboration is a cornerstone of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the Learning Journey provides users with in-depth advice and resources on how to convene and partner for the Goals.

“It’s my hope that the SDG Lab Learning Journey will serve as a compass or road map to help other organizations, entities, start-ups and individuals in their own journey towards bringing the Sustainable Development Goals to life in their own contexts.”

Director of the SDG Lab Nadia Isler



The SDG Lab Learning Journey outlines steps for replicating the model in other contexts.

Sustainable industries for a healthy planet

On World Environment Day, the UN launched a global campaign to protect and restore life on our planet – the [United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#). It aspires to unite the world behind a common goal of preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. However, like the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), it will only succeed if everyone plays a part, including businesses in the primary and industrial sectors of the economy.

During 2021, UN Geneva had the opportunity to contribute to collaboration and innovation in these areas. In June, Director-General Tatiana Valovaya participated in the Special Forum on Responsible Diamond Sourcing, held on the margins of the Kimberley Process intersessional meeting. This was an occasion to build bridges between the public and private sectors and to discuss how the commitments to social responsibility in this industry could be turned into tangible actions. Emphasizing that the sustainability paradigm was a major departure from the economic growth paradigm, the Director-General commended the readiness of business to become more than a partner for financial resources and to play a meaningful role in the implementation of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

In July, the Director-General took part in Sustainable Fashion Hard Talk, organized by the [United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion](#), alongside representatives of a wide range of Geneva-based UN specialized agencies and partner organizations. Held on the sidelines of the [high-level political forum on sustainable development](#), the event resulted in the creation of a knowledge base to improve coordination between UN agencies and promote projects that not only respond to social and environmental problems related to the fashion industry, but also ensure that the fashion value chain contributes to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Speakers at Sustainable Fashion Hard Talk

“The Sustainable Development Goals are not just abstract ‘UN goals’. It is important to understand that reaching these Goals will bring benefits for the long-term viability of private companies in every type of industry.”

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya

3

Chapter three

A centre for advocacy and outreach



UN Geneva puts peace at the heart of its agenda

Geneva, the birthplace of the Geneva Conventions and the Red Cross, is often referred to as the Capital of Peace. UN Geneva and the wider International Geneva ecosystem play a central role in international efforts to build and promote peace. In 2021, two of International Geneva's flagship events, the [Geneva Peace Talks](#) and [Geneva Peace Week](#), brought together inspiring voices for a global conversation on peace.

This year's hybrid Geneva Peace Talks took place on 21 September, the [International Day of Peace](#). Under the theme of "Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world", 12 speakers, musicians and artists from different walks of life and different parts of the world shared their stories. Their remarkable journeys towards peace served as inspiration for transforming our world into one that is not only more equal, inclusive and sustainable but also healthier. The ninth Geneva Peace Talks were viewed by more than a thousand people in 70 countries.

Geneva Peace Week, held in November, aimed to galvanize leadership, build trust, and contribute to transforming international cooperation. With its theme "From seeds to systems of peace: weathering today's challenges", it linked participants in 30 online workshops and also offered them an engaging digital series full of podcasts, videos and blog articles. Geneva Peace Week continued its tradition of inspiring and enabling creative responses to violence, exclusion and conflict. In total, the eighth Geneva Peace Week connected 3,000 people from 113 countries.

Both events are a testament to the extensive collaborative efforts within International Geneva – by the [Geneva Peacebuilding Platform](#), [Interpeace](#), the [Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies](#), the Government of Switzerland and many more – and to the extraordinary engagement of the speakers and the participants.



Scan the QR code to revisit the [2021 Geneva Peace Talks](#).

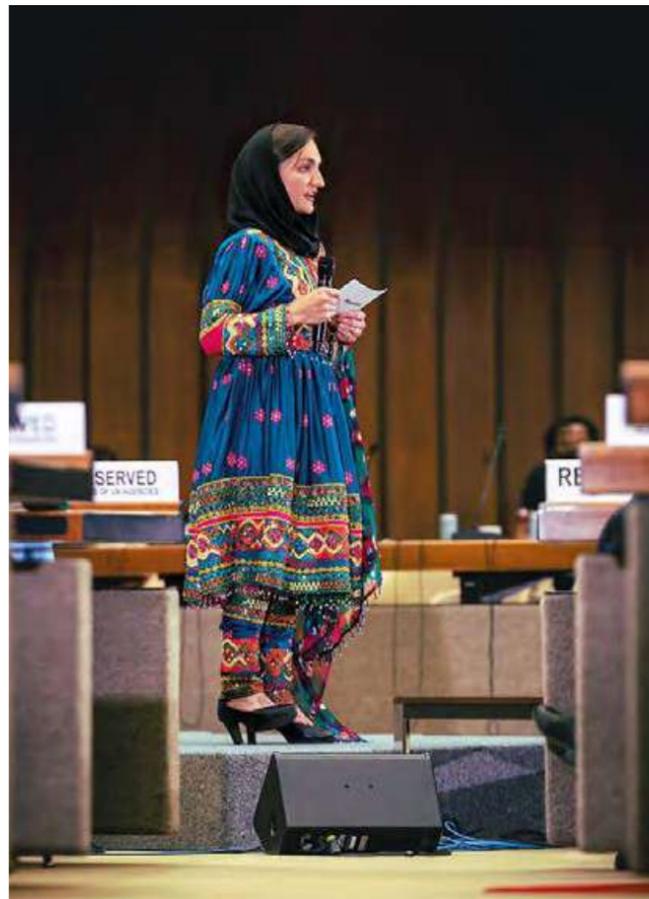


Photo: Antoine Tardy

Zarifa Ghafari, human rights activist, politician, entrepreneur, former mayor of Maidan Shahr and former director of a department in the Ministry of Defence of Afghanistan, speaks about her personal experience and the need to respect women's rights both in Afghanistan and globally, during the Geneva Peace Talks.



Photo: Antoine Tardy

A view of the in-person audience and speakers at the Geneva Peace Talks, held in Room XVIII of the Palais des Nations



Photo: Antoine Tardy

Twelve speakers from around the world shared their inspirational stories at the 2021 edition of the Geneva Peace Talks.



Baaba Maal, founder of the NANN-K Foundation, sings during the Geneva Peace Talks.

Photo: Antoine Tardy

UN Geneva and UEFA join forces to promote sustainability and peace

A successful partnership was first formed between UN Geneva and the [Union of European Football Associations \(UEFA\)](#) in 2018 when they jointly organized the first “Match for Solidarity” charity football game, with the support of the City and Canton of Geneva and the Geneva Stadium Foundation. The Match for Solidarity raised a total of £684,400 for the [UEFA Foundation for children](#) to fund humanitarian and development projects around the world.

In January 2021, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya and UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin formalized the partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding at the House of European Football in Nyon, Switzerland.

The memorandum of understanding establishes a formal institutional partnership and a commitment to working together, and outlines concrete activities to harness football’s capacity to promote sustainable development and peace through sport.

Mr. Čeferin said that the memorandum of understanding and UEFA’s strong partnership with UN Geneva “is a testament to the values that our organizations share and promote, such as respect for human rights and dignity, democracy, non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion, solidarity and sustainability. Football has a unique power to bring people together and drive positive social change.”

The two organizations are now working together to organize the next Match for Solidarity.



Photo: UEFA

UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin and UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya sign the memorandum of understanding.



Commemorative events at UN Geneva

Every year, UN Geneva commemorates important historical events and honours international days. Until COVID-19 struck, these commemorations took place almost exclusively in person, often with several hundred people in attendance. In 2021, a hybrid approach was adopted: there was a small physical presence, in keeping with the measures put in place to counter the pandemic, with the event being relayed live to a wider audience online.

This year, UN Geneva used Facebook Live to stream three events: [International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust](#), [International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers](#) and [World Humanitarian Day](#). High-quality footage was transmitted simultaneously through UNTV and Facebook. UN Geneva's Facebook Live coverage of these three events garnered an unprecedentedly large audience, reaching nearly 100,000 people around the globe and getting more than 38,000 views.

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

"You must follow me, the one who does not follow me is dead," reminisced Holocaust survivor Fanny Ben-Ami in a [pre-recorded video](#) shown at the [Holocaust remembrance](#) ceremony held at UN Geneva on 27 January. Aged 90, Ms. Ben-Ami shared her experience in German-occupied France and urged today's fighters to give up hatred and join forces to bring about positive change.

This year's Holocaust remembrance ceremony included the lighting of a commemorative candle, a minute's silence, and remarks by the Director-General of UN Geneva, the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Representative of Germany. Germany held the presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2020/21.



Scan the QR code to watch Fanny Ben-Ami's video message.

Holocaust survivor Fanny Ben-Ami recalls her tragic experience, in a video message shared on the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.



A candle is lit in honour of the victims of the Holocaust.



UN Photo: Hugo Mantecillo

International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

On 7 April, UN Geneva held a hybrid event to commemorate the [International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda](#) and to mark the 27th anniversary of the genocide.

The event opened with a candle-lighting ceremony and a minute's silence to honour the victims. Nadia Galinier, a survivor of the genocide, shared her personal story with participants. Remarks were also made by the Directors-General of UN Geneva and of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, and others.

"Every year, here in Geneva, we come together to pay tribute to the victims, to pledge our support to the survivors and to recognize the remarkable determination of the people of Rwanda in rebuilding their lives and their country."

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya



Scan the QR code to watch a recording of the commemoration.



A candle-lighting ceremony during the commemoration of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. From left to right: César Murangira, President of IBUKA Memory and Justice - Association of Genocide Survivors (Swiss section); Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of UN Geneva; Marie Chantal Rwakazina, Permanent Representative of Rwanda; and Sarah Burckhardt, poet

UN Photo

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

On 1 June, UN Geneva honoured the memory of more than 4,000 fallen UN peacekeepers and paid tribute to over 1 million uniformed and civilian UN personnel who have served the cause of peace with selfless determination.

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya, President of the International Association of Soldiers of Peace Laurent Attar-Bayrou, and Burundian diplomat Thérèse Manirambona spoke in Ariana Park in front of the memorial to those who have given their lives for peace. They highlighted the significant contribution of Geneva-based UN organizations to addressing the root causes of conflict, which included poverty, inequality, marginalization and environmental degradation.

“Today, it is more important than ever to focus our efforts on conflict prevention, precluding the emergence of new hotbeds of tension and reducing the number of senseless attacks against all UN personnel and humanitarian workers in the field.”

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya



Scan the QR code to watch the [ceremony](#).

A wreath-laying ceremony was part of the commemoration of International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.



UN Photo: Volaine Martin

Children attend the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers ceremony.



UN Photo: Volaine Martin

World Humanitarian Day

This year’s World Humanitarian Day marked the 18th anniversary of the devastating suicide bombing of the Canal Hotel in Baghdad which caused the death of 22 people, many of whom were UN staff members.

“Eighteen years have passed since that terrifying afternoon. Eighteen is more than a symbolic number. It is the time that it takes for a child to get to adulthood. It is the time of a generation that grew without a parent, a sibling, a spouse, a son or a daughter,” said Laura Dolci, who lost her husband that day when their son was only 26 days old.

The [commemoration](#), organized by UN Geneva and the [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), and held in hybrid format, also paid tribute to the 17 UN staff members who perished in Algiers on 11 December 2007, in addition to the many other victims of terrorism. Furthermore, World Humanitarian Day provided an opportunity for the international community in Geneva to pay tribute to the thousands of aid workers around the globe and to honour the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The event included a wreath-laying and candle-lighting ceremony followed by a minute of silence for the victims.



Scan the QR code to revisit the [commemoration](#).



UN Photo: Marija Potocnik

Laura Dolci, a family member of a victim of the Canal Hotel bombing, speaks at UN Geneva’s World Humanitarian Day ceremony.

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was marked with a special hybrid meeting at the Palais des Nations on 29 November. UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya chaired the meeting and read out a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, who expressed concerns over persistent violations of the rights of Palestinian people along with the expansion of settlements in occupied East Jerusalem, which put at risk the prospect of a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ambassador Ibrahim Khraishi, reading out a statement by the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, expressed the readiness of the State of Palestine to work with the international community to salvage the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders. Speakers expressed their preoccupation with regard to the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had been further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Scan the QR code to watch the [event](#).



Participants at the event held at UN Geneva to mark International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Amplifying voices for gender equality

In 2021, UN Geneva fostered gender equality by promoting an inclusive working environment and implementing various outreach initiatives.

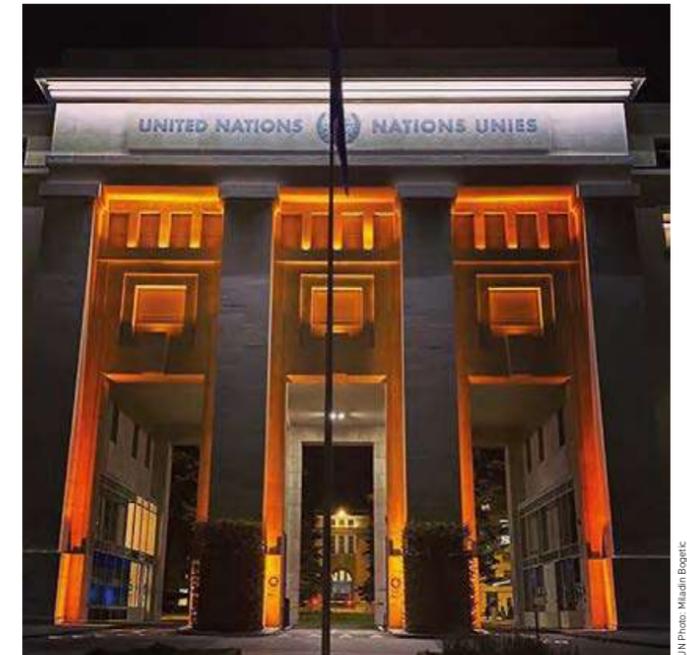
As an active member of the International Gender Champions network, the Director-General, Tatiana Valovaya, participated in a variety of events organized in International Geneva and beyond to promote the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. One of the Director-General's commitments as an International Gender Champion in 2021 was to organize a photo exhibition for the wider International Geneva community, entitled *Not a Woman's Job?* Inaugurated virtually on International Workers' Day, 1 May, the exhibition told powerful stories of hundreds of women all around the world who show that all jobs are for all people, men and women alike. It was also on display for the people of Geneva at the Musée Rath from 1 September to 10 October as part of UN Geneva's Divers Égales Unis exhibition.

In March, the Director-General joined the "Women Rise for All" leadership dialogue, which aimed to mobilize support for the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the UN road map for social and economic recovery, as laid out in the United Nations framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19.

In April, the Director-General took part in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development initiative "Les 8 du mois until we're there" to keep Sustainable Development Goal 5 on the agenda all year, not just on International Women's Day on 8 March. In a [video](#) for the initiative, the Director-General stressed two elements that in her experience had proven effective in dealing with unconscious gender bias: first, recognizing and exposing it, and second, having a strategy to address it.

"If you manage to fight bias yourself and succeed in making a career in a field which has not been opened for women before, you have to support other young girls, let them feel that they can be the best in a career they chose."

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya



The façade of the Palais des Nations illuminated in orange for the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign.

In November, UN Geneva joined an international campaign for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence" campaign started on 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ran until 10 December, Human Rights Day. For this occasion, the Palais des Nations was lit up in orange for the campaign's motto: "Orange the world: End violence against women now!"

In addition, UN Geneva reviewed its Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and extended it until the end of 2021.

Spotlight on women in security at UN Geneva

In 2021, UN Geneva highlighted the contribution of women in male-dominated professions – not only as part of the *Not a Woman's Job?* exhibition, but also in our own Security and Safety Service. The Service, which numbers 173 uniformed security officers, 25 of whom are women, has been committed to improving gender balance among staff and attracting more qualified female applicants.

In cooperation with the [United Nations Information Service in Geneva](#), a short [video](#) was produced featuring four female security officers, from different backgrounds, performing various duties at UN Geneva. In the video, the four colleagues – Gabriela, Marion, Ionela and Marjorie – tell their stories, share their impressions of working for the UN, and encourage women thinking about working with UN Geneva's Security and Safety Service to apply. While reaching a more gender-balanced workforce is a gradual process for any organization, a video like this one, which has been widely shared across social media, is a move in the right direction.



Scan the QR code to watch the [video](#).



UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

A security officer raises the UN flag at an event in Ariana Park.

Six young activists set an inspiring example

"[New Generation, New Solutions](#)", the third Young Activists Summit, honoured six outstanding young people who are driving change for their communities and the environment. The 2021 laureates, aged 15 to 26, have all demonstrated that youth have the power to shape a sustainable and equal world. At a time when more than half of the global population is under the age of 30, they have made it clear that sustainable development, climate action, human rights and peace cannot be achieved unless we involve youth and create the conditions that allow them to unleash their full potential.

Several hundred young people gathered at the Palais des Nations for the Summit on 18 November to hear the laureates' stories, while thousands more from some 130 countries watched the live webcast. The Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, Melissa Fleming, addressed the Summit. There was also a video message from the Special Envoy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Angelina Jolie.



Scan the QR code to watch a video recording of [Young Activists Summit](#).



Photo: Young Activists Summit

Young activists pose for a selfie with the host of the Young Activists Summit, Radio Télévision Suisse journalist Tania Chytil (left).



Six young people from around the world shared their impressive stories at the Young Activists Summit.

UN Geneva broadens its outreach to Swiss schools

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Geneva has stepped up its outreach activities in Swiss schools with its [UN@School](#) initiative, formerly known as "UN75 – Meeting with Swiss Schools". UN@School, a partnership between UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#), the [United Nations Information Service in Geneva](#), and the [Eduki Foundation](#), sees experts from International Geneva travel throughout Switzerland – both physically and virtually – to talk with hundreds of students aged from 12 to 21.

UN@School improves students' understanding of the importance of multilateralism through presentations, discussions, quizzes and practical exercises. The experts focus on the multilateral processes taking place in Geneva, and also show how what happens in Geneva is closely connected to the UN's work in the field.

Like many of his peers, Damian, a high school student from Zurich, was most impressed with pictures of projects implemented by the UN on the ground. "A lot of information was new to me. I hadn't realized the UN helped people in poor countries... I thought it was just a parliament discussing politics all day long," he said.

A series of presentations delivered in Switzerland's Italian-speaking canton of Ticino included a component on [Verified](#),



School students in the canton of Ticino learn about the UN's Verified initiative and strategies to identify false information online.

a UN initiative aimed at countering misinformation. Students were encouraged to *fare una pausa* – to pause – before sharing content online, and reflected on their own strategies to spot false information online and to prevent its spread.



World Health Organization representative Emilie Peron (bottom right) discusses issues with students in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, as part of the UN@School initiative.

United Nations Women's Guild Geneva ceremony honours Children's Walks

On 18 November, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya met, at the Palais des Nations, more than 30 students and teachers from eight Swiss schools who had taken part in the Children's Walks initiative.

The Children's Walks are an annual fundraising activity which has been organized by the [United Nations Women's Guild Geneva](#) since 2002. Children from local schools seek sponsorship from friends and relatives to walk or run kilometres in the grounds of the Palais des Nations. The money raised supports financially disadvantaged children's education by helping them pay for school and transportation fees, textbooks and uniforms. Taking part in the Children's Walks also encourages solidarity among children.

This year, due to the COVID-19 measures in place, it was not possible to hold the event in the usual manner at the Palais des Nations. Instead, Children's Walks were organized by individual Swiss schools. Funds raised by the students were sent to more than 70 schoolchildren in four countries: Nicaragua, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The ceremony at the Palais des Nations to recognize the children who had participated in the event was also an opportunity to mark [World Children's Day](#). This year, the Day was framed around the theme of "A better future for every child". The Director-General told the children present that she was proud to see so many young people willing to take action to help children in different countries go to school and continue their learning.

At the end of the event, students received copies of publications produced by UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#), so that they could learn about the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and find out what they can do to make our planet healthier, cleaner and safer and to build a better future for everyone, everywhere.



Swiss students meet with UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya to celebrate the United Nations Women's Guild Geneva Children's Walks.

"Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented global school closures. In some countries, like Switzerland, online learning was made possible thanks to reliable Internet access and modern technologies. But that was not the case for many children around the world. Today, two years since the onset of the pandemic, there are still 117 million children out of school all over the world. Always the poorest and most vulnerable suffer most, and it is even more difficult for girls than for boys to go to school."

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya

Publications to inspire global change

This year, UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#) produced a range of new publications to encourage global change for the greater good. These add to the Perception Change Project's wide array of publications on a number of topics, which are available to everyone.



Scan the QR code to access all the [publications](#) of the Perception Change Project.

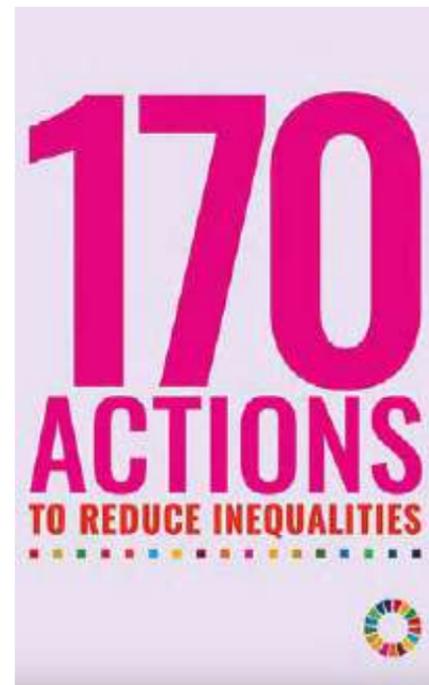
170 Actions to Reduce Inequalities

Inequalities within and among countries are an ongoing cause for concern. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated existing inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest.

170 Actions to Reduce Inequalities is the latest in the *170 Actions* series of booklets that have been developed by interns in the Office of the Director-General of UN Geneva. Published in September and available in English and French, it is a helpful guide to daily actions we can all take to reduce inequalities around the globe. The simple layout of ten actions for each of the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) makes it easy for everyone to play a role.



The *170 Actions to Reduce Inequalities* booklet suggests 170 simple actions – ten actions for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – that we can take to help reduce inequalities globally.



The *170 Actions to Reduce Inequalities* booklet, published by UN Geneva's Perception Change Project

Videos to publicize 170 Actions to Combat Climate Change

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges faced by humanity. But it is not something that only world leaders have the power to change. We are all responsible for our own actions and we can start by doing small things each day in our homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

In 2020 the Perception Change Project produced a booklet titled *170 Actions to Combat Climate Change* and in 2021 two follow-on animated videos were produced. Both the booklet and the videos emphasize the importance of making adjustments to our daily lives to have a positive impact on the planet. The videos were launched on Twitter, receiving more than 4,400 views and collecting a total of just under 43,000 impressions.



Two videos were launched in 2021 to publicize *170 Actions to Combat Climate Change*.



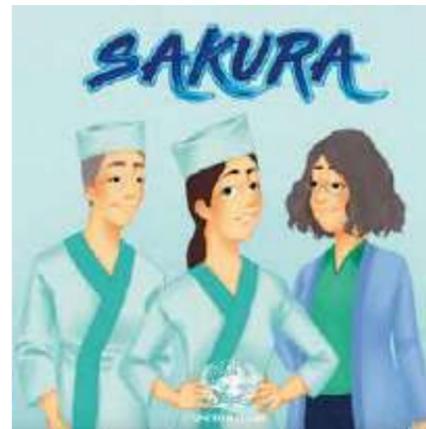
Scan the QR codes to watch the [videos](#).

New children’s book on gender equality

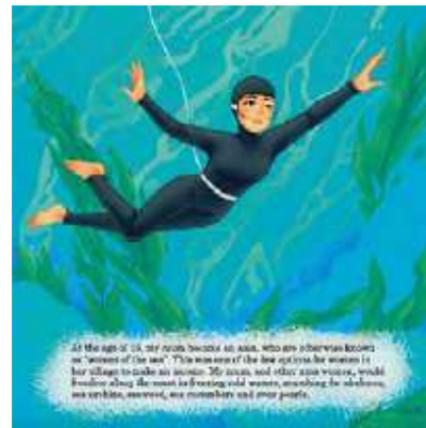
Sakura, a storybook for children on the topic of gender equality, was published in August by the Perception Change Project. It tells the story of a young girl with a dream of becoming a sushi chef in a country which traditionally believes that only men are fit for the job.

This book is the sixth in the *Iceberg* series, which depicts the positive work being done “below the surface” by the United Nations to tackle global challenges. *Sakura* is also the first book in the series to include activities for young people to do in the classroom with their peers and teachers.

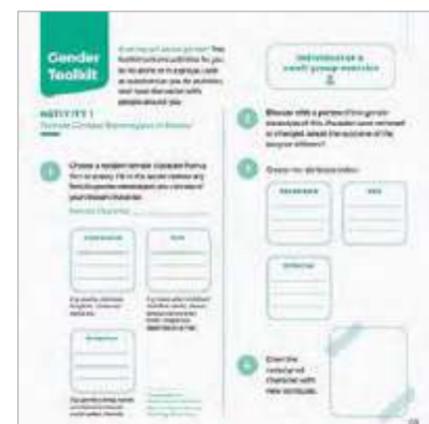
Close to 1,000 copies were distributed at the Musée Rath as part of the *Not a Woman’s Job?* exhibition. *Sakura* is available in English and French in printed versions, and online along with the first five books in the *Iceberg* series.



Sakura is the sixth book in the *Iceberg* series.



Sakura is aimed at children and addresses the topic of gender equality.

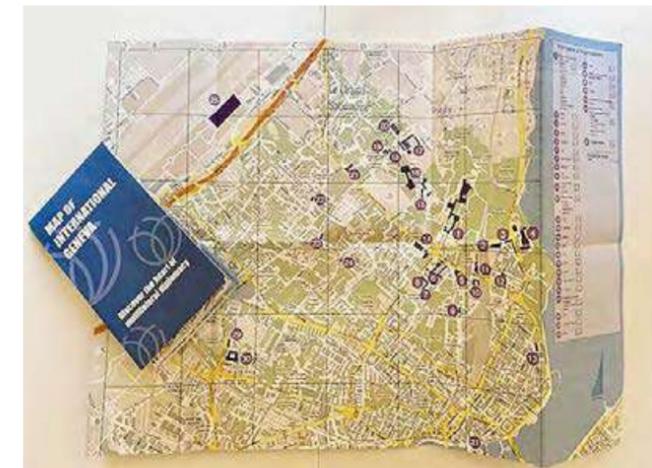


Sakura includes fun activities for children on the topic of gender roles and stereotypes.

Pocket map of International Geneva

The small city of Geneva is densely populated with international organizations, permanent missions, non-governmental organizations and more. With an increasing demand to easily locate all these Geneva-based organizations, the Perception Change Project developed a pocket-sized map to be distributed to the public.

Seeing the locations of these organizations on one page gives an appreciation of the vast number of actors working together in Geneva to improve the lives of people around the world. The map also shows how the physical proximity of the buildings allows for partnerships to easily be built between organizations.

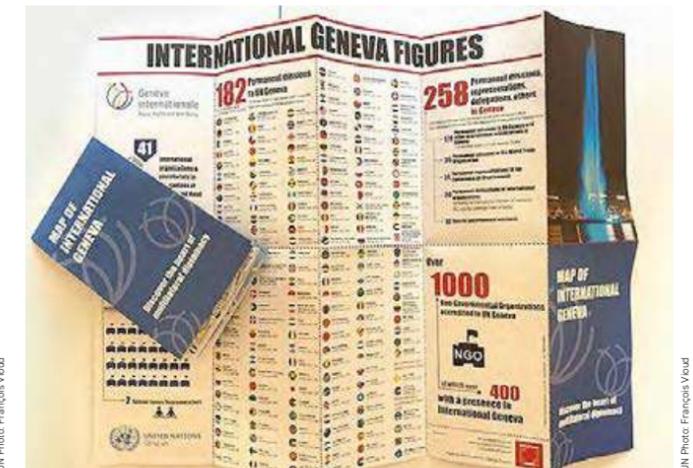


The pocket-sized map of International Geneva shows the locations of many organizations in the city.

Almost 3,000 maps have been distributed to hotels around Geneva and to Geneva Tourism. The map is also available online.



Scan the QR code to access the map.



The map also contains key statistics about International Geneva.

Travellers greeted with a panoramic view of International Geneva

Geneva is the global capital of peace, rights and cooperation. More than 40 international organizations in the Lake Geneva region are working constantly on solutions to challenges in fields such as health, humanitarian assistance and the environment. These organizations are collectively known as International Geneva.

To celebrate International Geneva, UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#), in collaboration with the [Fondation pour Genève](#) and [Geneva Airport](#), unveiled a 12-metre-long digital banner in December in the arrivals area of the airport. The banner gives a panoramic view of the buildings in International Geneva, highlighting the range of organizations and the important work that they carry out every day.



Passengers arriving at Geneva Airport are greeted with a digital banner displaying the organizations that comprise International Geneva.

How does International Geneva make an impact on everyone's life?

UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#) continues to reach its growing digital audience with creative campaigns that simplify data and information to show the impact of International Geneva. In 2021, the Perception Change Project teamed up with the [Fondation pour Genève](#) to develop the [#GenevaForYou](#) initiative. Using beautiful artworks by renowned Swiss artist Zep, the [#GenevaForYou](#) social media campaign showcased 26 international organizations in Geneva and how their work affects the daily life of everyone, everywhere. The content was based on *Genève à la rencontre des Suisses*, a previous touring exhibition. Thanks to the support of the [Fondation pour Genève](#) and the [United Nations Association Switzerland](#), the campaign, with tweets in English, French and German, was shared with local and international audiences over the course of three months.

With its creative and multimedia content, the Perception Change Project reached the milestone of 10,000 followers on [Twitter](#) in 2021, cementing its place as a rich source of timely information about the worldwide impact of International Geneva.



The [#GenevaForYou](#) campaign used artworks by Swiss artist Zep to show how International Geneva makes an impact.



The Twitter account of UN Geneva's Perception Change Project continues to increase its reach.

#YouNeedToKnow campaign travels from Geneva to Glasgow

What do you need to know about COP 26 in Glasgow, the 26th session of what is more formally named the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? Aside from being one of the most important climate events since COP 21 which culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agreement, it also partnered with the well-travelled *#YouNeedToKnow* exhibition, which communicates key facts about the Sustainable Development Goals. This time *#YouNeedToKnow* was displayed at Glasgow Airport, the gateway for most of the COP 26 participants. Since 2016, the campaign has travelled several times to international airports around the world – including to Zurich several times, and to London, Madrid, Mexico City, Milan and Moscow.

In 2021, UN Geneva's Perception Change Project reworked the *#YouNeedToKnow* exhibition, bringing travellers new video content about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, while placing special emphasis on Goal 13 on climate action.



Perception Change Project meet-ups

Since 2015, UN Geneva's Perception Change Project has offered opportunities for partnering organizations to come together and share ideas to improve the lives of everyone globally, through their regular "meet-up" sessions. These meetings are a place where experts working in International Geneva can test out creative ways of communicating and develop new projects that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2021, the Perception Change Project hosted five virtual meet-ups for partners, on engaging topics that included communicating humanly in a virtual world, communicating through innovative events and communicating together about international days. The meet-ups enabled partners to expand their networks and join forces to maximize the impact of their projects.



Representatives of the International Organization for Standardization, the International Electrotechnical Commission and the International Telecommunication Union give a presentation on their joint celebration of World Standards Day at a Perception Change Project meet-up in October.

From UN Geneva to every corner of the globe

Social media content thrived at UN Geneva in 2021. In February, UN Geneva's social media platforms won second prize at the [Geneva Engage Awards](#) in the category of international organizations. The Awards monitor, analyse, and rank the success of the social media presence of various actors in International Geneva.

Aiming to be in sync with global trends and constantly increase UN Geneva's reach to audiences on social media, in April we introduced Instagram reels: short and snappy videos showing different aspects of our work and presenting the Palais des Nations to the wider world. The most successful reel so far – explaining the origin of the UN flag – has amassed more than 45,000 views.

In May, UN Geneva passed a major milestone, reaching 1.5 million followers across our five platforms: [Twitter in English](#), [Twitter in French](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#). The steady growth

has continued – combining “hard news” and “lighter” content has turned out to be the right formula. Coverage of major events at the Palais des Nations, such as the Human Rights Council, the high-level meetings on Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic, and press conferences on a wide array of subjects, increased the visibility of UN Geneva's platforms globally. In September, we published our most successful [tweet](#) of recent years, featuring the superstar boy band BTS at the General Assembly. UN Geneva's social media outreach journey continues!



Scan the QR code to watch UN Geneva's Instagram reel on the [origin of the UN flag](#).



A popular tweet from UN Geneva in 2021 featured superstar boy band BTS.

UN Geneva joins the global effort to combat misinformation

Misinformation and disinformation are nothing new, but during a major global crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, these two trends have come to the fore. The mix of fake news, people's fears and a lack of information literacy led the United Nations to launch [Verified](#) in May 2020. Verified is an initiative to combat the growing scourge of COVID-19-related falsehoods by increasing the volume and reach of trusted, accurate information. Through Verified, the United Nations calls on people around the world to sign up as “information volunteers” to share trusted content and keep their families and communities safe and connected. Clear, catchy and engaging multimedia products are shared through a vast network that includes the United Nations, partners, and volunteers.

The [United Nations Information Service in Geneva](#) joined this global undertaking in 2020, and has expanded its efforts this year, reaching out to its approximately 1.7 million followers on social media with accurate, fact-checked materials, and incorporating the initiative into events such as the [Graduate Study Programme](#).

It is important to remember that each of us has a role to play, by being careful about what we share, promoting facts patiently and consistently, and not staying silent when faced with false information. Join the fight: become a Verified volunteer!

BEFORE YOU SHARE, THINK:

- II WHO made it?
- II WHAT is the source?
- II WHERE did it come from?
- II WHY are you sharing this?
- II WHEN was it published?

#TAKECAREBEFOREYOUSHAKE



Verified

Flooding the Internet with science, solutions and solidarity to counter the growing scourge of misinformation -- a poison that is putting even more lives at risk

Partnership between the UN Department of Global Communications and Purpose, one of the world's leading social mobilization organizations

In collaboration with UN agencies and country teams as well as media, influencers, civil society and businesses



What's the difference?

Misinformation: False information spread as truth, often inadvertently

Disinformation: False information spread with malicious intent

Podcasts help UN Geneva reach new audiences around the world

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Geneva has connected with listeners around the world via weekly podcasts in English and French that deliver news from Geneva and delve deeper into the issues making headlines.

The French-language podcast *ONU Info Genève*, produced by the United Nations Information Service in Geneva, features weekly interviews with UN leaders and other personalities. Conversations with the then-Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Ramiz Alakbarov, for example, were particularly popular, as the situations in these countries had captured global attention.

The *ONU Info Genève* podcast, launched in April 2020, is downloaded an average of 1,000 times a month, mostly by listeners in France, Switzerland and the United States of America and in a number of West African countries. It is also regularly featured on the "Genève Vision" platform, thanks to a partnership with Swiss broadcaster Radio Télévision Suisse.

Produced weekly since late 2020, *UN Catch-up Dateline Geneva*, our English-language podcast, features news from Geneva, as well as interviews and commentary. It has a large – and growing – new listener base, thanks to wide distribution on social media, digital platforms and the UN Geneva website. It is available on the [UN News](#) portal and through applications such as SoundCloud and Apple Podcast, and has had over 630,000 audio interactions (plays, feeds, shares and downloads) since its first episode.



Scan the QR code to access the [ONU Info Genève](#) podcast.



Scan the QR code to access the [UN Catch-up Dateline Geneva](#) podcast.



UN Photo: Lang Meizhi

Alexandre Carette (right), host of the ONU Info Genève podcast, interviews guest Eric Tistoune (left), Chief of the Human Rights Council Branch at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Languages and multilingualism at UN Geneva

Mainstreaming multilingualism across UN Geneva

Multilingualism – as an enabler of multilateral diplomacy – is a founding principle and core value of the United Nations. It improves the UN's inclusivity, performance and transparency, and helps achieve the UN's goals. Member States and the Secretary-General regularly underscore the need for multilingualism at the UN.

In Geneva, we have taken a proactive approach to multilingualism for some time, but more remains to be done. At the initiative of our focal points for multilingualism, UN Geneva established the Multilingualism Action Team, which has developed an action plan and a communications plan to guide UN Geneva's initiatives in this area.

Celebrating language and tradition virtually and in person

As the epidemiological situation in Switzerland evolved during 2021, UN Geneva maintained an agile approach to organizing its public events, including our celebrations of the six official UN languages. Whereas events in the first half of the year took place virtually, as we moved into the latter half of the year, several events were held in a hybrid format.

French Language Day – 20 March

With the support of the International Organization of la Francophonie, we presented *Spelling under Pressure*, a live, virtual, interactive play about spelling in French, starring actors Arnaud Hoedt and Jérôme Piron.



Scan the QR code to watch a recording of the play.

ONU Info Genève, UN Geneva's French-language podcast, produced a special episode about the French language in international organizations, featuring remarks from the Permanent Representative of France and the Permanent Observer of the International Organization of la Francophonie.



Scan the QR code to listen to the podcast episode.



Actors Jérôme Piron and Arnaud Hoedt in a virtual play for French Language Day

Chinese Language Day – 20 April

In collaboration with the Permanent Mission of China, we premiered a special one-hour programme on the theme of "spring", featuring short videos, stories, songs and poems.



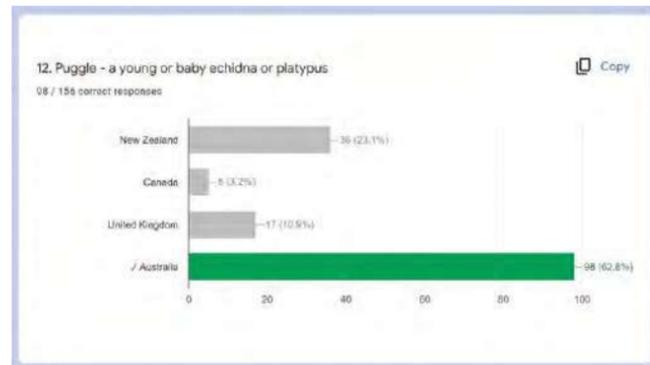
Scan the QR code to watch the programme.



UN Geneva's Chinese Language Day celebration linked up artists and performers from China with participants from around the world.

English Language Day – 23 April

To mark English Language Day, UN Geneva created a quiz to test the public's knowledge of words recently added to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Examples included *okada*, which is a motorcycle used in Nigeria as a taxi; *soaker*, a Canadian word that describes stepping into a puddle and getting wet shoes; and *deliverology*, a term coined in British English to refer to the process of successfully (or unsuccessfully) implementing policy and achieving goals in government.



Part of UN Geneva's English Language Day quiz

Russian Language Day – 6 June

UN Geneva hosted a live, online theatre performance dedicated to *Eugene Onegin*, a novel by Russian author Alexander Pushkin, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to UN Geneva and Russian Cultural Seasons, and with the support of the Consulate-General of the Russian Federation in Lausanne.



Scan the QR code to watch a [recording](#) of the performance.



The Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, Olga Lyubimova, delivers remarks during the virtual Russian Language Day celebration.

Spanish Language Week – October

In October, we played host to a lively celebration of Spanish language and Hispanic culture, featuring a tango performance by dancers Claire Rüfenacht and Cédric Basso, accompanied by vocalist and guitarist Pedro Ratto and bandoneon player Gaspar Pouyé. The event was held in front of a live audience at the Palais des Nations and was [broadcast](#) live on UN Geneva's Facebook page, attracting more than 7,600 viewers.



Scan the QR code to watch a [360° video](#) of the performance.



Claire Rüfenacht and Cédric Basso dance a tango at the Palais des Nations for Spanish Language Week.

Arabic Language Day – 18 December

For Arabic Language Day, UN Geneva welcomed writer and filmmaker Nacer Khemir for a talk on the different words for *love* in the Arabic language, fashion designer Omar Ponsot for a presentation on how the Arabic language inspires creativity, musical performances by Mohamed Assi, and a live poetry reading by writer Fadhil al-Azzawi. The event was held in a hybrid format, with panellists and participants joining in person at the Palais des Nations and online. UN Geneva also provided live interpretation of the celebration in Arabic, English and French.



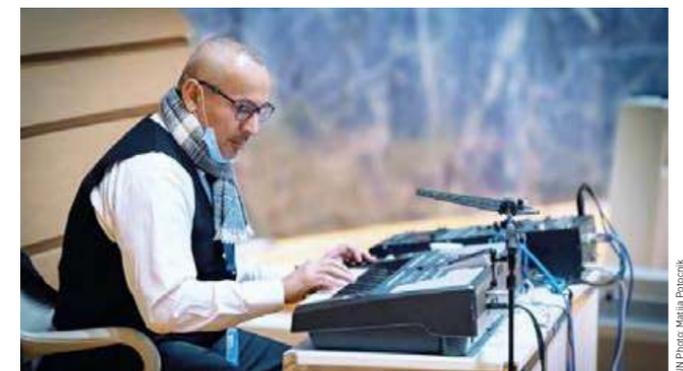
Scan the QR code to watch the [event](#) in Arabic.



Scan the QR code to watch the [event](#) in English.



Scan the QR code to watch the [event](#) in French.



Mohamed Assi performs at the Arabic Language Day event.

Many languages, one common mission

21 February marked [International Mother Language Day](#) – a celebration of multilingualism that encourages us to reflect not only on the interconnected world that we serve, but also on the diverse backgrounds of our staff members working every day to carry out the mandate of the United Nations.

To mark the occasion, UN Geneva produced *We, the Peoples: Many Languages, One Common Mission*. This video features UN Geneva staff members reading excerpts from the Charter of the United Nations in 26 different languages, including Belgian Sign Language. Since its premiere on social media, the video has been viewed a thousand times on YouTube and three thousand times on Twitter.



Scan the QR code to watch the [video](#).

In 2021, UN Geneva staff spoke 69 mother languages.

UN Geneva also hosted an online screening of *Colours of the Alphabet*, an award-winning feature-length documentary that follows three young students in rural Zambia as they navigate the challenges of a different language at school from the one they speak at home. Following the screening, we welcomed the film's director, Alastair Cole, and its producer, Nick Higgins, for a live question-and-answer session with a global audience.



Scan the QR code to watch a recording of the [question-and-answer session](#).



The *We, the Peoples: Many Languages, One Common Mission* video

Accessibility as a cornerstone of communication

Just as the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the inadequacy of resources and avenues of support available to persons with disabilities, it has underscored the importance of making essential information accessible in a variety of formats.

For the past three years, the United Nations has officially observed [World Braille Day](#) on 4 January in promoting Braille as a vital means of communication that contributes to the full realization of human rights for persons with visual impairments. This year, UN Geneva released an interview with Director-General Tatiana Valovaya on the importance of marking this day.



Scan the QR code to listen to the [World Braille Day interview](#) with UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya.

According to World Health Organization estimates, around 2.2 billion people globally have a visual impairment.

On 23 September, UN Geneva joined forces with the [World Federation of the Deaf](#) for a webinar to celebrate [International Day of Sign Languages](#). Bringing together a panel of experts from the World Federation of the Deaf, UN Geneva, the [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and Member States, we sent a strong message of encouragement and empowerment: that every State can take concrete actions to provide sign languages to everyone.



Scan the QR code to watch the [International Day of Sign Languages webinar](#).

According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are more than 70 million deaf persons worldwide, who collectively use more than 300 different sign languages.



The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Bahamas and Chair of the Human Rights Council Task Force on Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities, Keva L. Bain, speaks at a virtual event celebrating the International Day of Sign Languages.

Shaping a more equal United Nations through disability-inclusive language

Words matter. The language we use to refer to persons with disabilities has an impact – it shapes our and others' perceptions of the world, affects whether people feel included, and can either create or help remove barriers to full and meaningful participation in society.

This year, UN Geneva's [Disability Inclusive Language Guidelines](#), first developed by the Languages Service of the [Division of Conference Management](#) in 2020, were produced in all six official UN languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish – and made available publicly.

These guidelines provide practical recommendations for UN staff, experts, partners, and indeed everyone who wants to learn to speak and write about persons with disabilities in a respectful and inclusive way – for speeches, presentations and everyday communication.

With this resource, we aim to take a major step forward in mainstreaming the principles of disability inclusion and strengthening the human rights model of disability across UN Geneva.



Scan the QR code to access UN Geneva's [Disability Inclusive Language Guidelines](#).

Integrating accessibility and inclusion

On 3 December, UN Geneva hosted a special event at the Palais des Nations to celebrate [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#), bringing together international and local Geneva to build on the themes of accessibility and inclusion. Around 30 people from organizations of persons with disabilities in the Geneva area attended.

After opening remarks from the Director of UN Geneva's [Division of Conference Management](#), Kira Kruglikova, and the Manager of the Universal Accessibility Programme at the [City of Geneva](#), Francesca Cauvin, attendees were introduced to the [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) and learned how it is being put into practice by UN Geneva. This was followed by a fully accessible guided tour of the Palais des Nations, and coffee and conversations with UN staff and fellow participants about how to strengthen disability inclusion across the city of Geneva.

The event was organized by UN Geneva's Disability Inclusion Team and Visitors' Service, with support from the Division of Conference Management and the [Information Service](#). UN staff also volunteered their time to help the visitors navigate the Palais des Nations smoothly.



Members of organizations of persons with disabilities in the Geneva area browse a photography exhibition at the Palais des Nations during a guided tour.

Equal opportunity and the full enjoyment of human rights

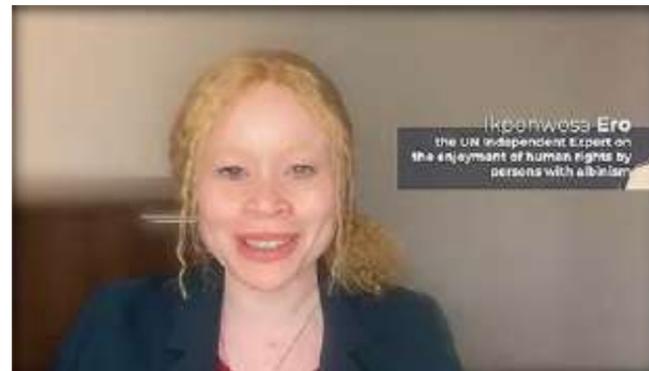
International Albinism Awareness Day

Since 2015, the United Nations has officially celebrated [International Albinism Awareness Day](#) on 13 June. The theme in 2021 was “Strength Beyond All Odds” – chosen to highlight the achievements of persons with albinism and how they have defied expectations in many different domains.

This year, UN Geneva teamed up with Ikponwosa Ero, the [Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism](#), who recorded a short video message about progress in albinism awareness and the human rights of persons with albinism.



Scan the QR code to watch the [video message](#).



Ikponwosa Ero, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, speaks in a video message.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights developed an [online quiz](#) for the public to test their knowledge of the human rights of persons with albinism.



Scan the QR code to take the [quiz](#).

World Autism Awareness Day

Since 2008, the United Nations has officially observed [World Autism Awareness Day](#) on 2 April, highlighting the need to support and accommodate individuals with autism so that they can lead meaningful lives and participate fully in society.

Although autism is a common condition that can affect people of all backgrounds, the high level of stigmatization and lack of support for people with autism remains concerning. This year, to help both UN staff and the public assess their understanding of autism and confront misconceptions, UN Geneva's Disability Inclusion Team created an [autism knowledge quiz](#) for World Autism Awareness Day.



Scan the QR code to take UN Geneva's [World Autism Awareness Day quiz](#).



4

Chapter four

A centre for art, culture and history



Cultural diplomacy at UN Geneva

In 2021, UN Geneva continued to foster cultural diplomacy by providing a platform for sharing art and culture in different forms. UN Geneva's Cultural Activities Programme, in partnership with Member States and international organizations, curated 10 events and activities and offered them to delegates, staff and visitors. Art exhibitions, film screenings and concerts were held both virtually and in person, as UN Geneva continued to navigate the fast-evolving epidemiological situation and the associated restrictions.

Central to the Cultural Activities Programme are multilingualism and a shared understanding of United Nations values and principles. The events and activities this year showcased new perspectives on these themes, in six different languages. Some of the events are highlighted on these next pages.

Versus World Health Organization June



The World Health Organization staged an exhibition titled *Versus* at the Palais des Nations, on the theme of resilience. *Versus* featured a selection of artworks and performances from 20 art initiatives around the world. During the opening ceremony for the exhibition, panellists discussed the topic of resilience and art.



Scan the QR code to watch the [opening ceremony of Versus](#).

Baltic Appeal to the United Nations Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania September



In 2021, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania celebrated the 100th anniversary of their accession to the League of Nations and the 30th anniversary of their admission to the United Nations. To mark this occasion, their respective Permanent Missions in Geneva jointly organized a historical exhibition at the Palais des Nations. *Baltic Appeal to the United Nations* showcased unique archival documents compiled by the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) which traced the path of the Baltic States' membership of the United Nations.

"One Humanity" concert United Nations Alliance of Civilizations November



On 8 November, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations opened its new office at UN Geneva. To celebrate, it partnered with the [ONUART Foundation](#) to organize a concert entitled "One Humanity", featuring renowned German tenor Jonas Kaufmann.

The World in Faces
Russian Federation
November



The World in Faces, an exhibition by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation, highlighted the world's diversity. The exhibition comprised portraits captured by photographer Alexander Khimushin of indigenous people from 90 different ethnic groups around the world, all wearing their traditional clothing. The opening ceremony included a live performance from Russian folk band Heiro.

Dostoevsky and Music
Russian Federation
November



On 26 November, at the Palais des Nations, the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky. On this occasion, artists Anastasia Chertok and Dmitry Kondratkov performed some of Dostoevsky's favourite operas as well as songs based on his works.

International Bazaar returns to the Palais des Nations

Following a hiatus in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the protective measures and restrictions put in place at the Palais des Nations, UN Geneva and the United Nations Women's Guild Geneva joined forces in 2021 to hold – in compliance with safety protocols – the traditional International Bazaar.

Staff members, delegates and visitors enjoyed cuisine and crafts provided by the permanent missions to the UN in Geneva. These festivities in the halls of the Palais des Nations were a unique celebration of the different cultures and talents found in our global community.

Profits collected from the event will allow the United Nations Women's Guild Geneva to advance its work supporting women and children in need and the UN's commitment to equal rights and opportunities for all.



The Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, and the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Jürg Lauber, visit a stall at the Bazaar.



UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya delivers opening remarks at the Bazaar.

Ciné-ONU Geneva continues throughout the pandemic

Ciné-ONU Geneva organizes regular film screenings followed by debates on a wide range of issues that the United Nations works on. Early on in the pandemic, Ciné-ONU Geneva offered online screenings and discussions, and invited Ciné-ONU Brussels (the originator of the Ciné-ONU concept) and Ciné-ONU Vienna to join this initiative. Bringing the strengths of the three Ciné-ONU programmes together had the effect of expanding and diversifying our audiences, with some first-time viewers taking part from as far afield as Canada, China, India and Mexico.

In 2021, six virtual screenings were held, illustrating the rescue of Jews during the Second World War thanks to an Albanian code of honour, the Great Green Wall project to fight the effects of climate change and desertification in Africa, what it is like to be a woman working in the culinary industry, online abuse against women, climate change and the science of our planet, and how press freedom in defence of truth and democracy has been championed by journalist and 2021 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Maria Ressa.

When the epidemiological situation improved in Switzerland in mid-2021, Ciné-ONU Geneva made a return to one of the city's cinema houses, the Cinerama Empire, for two screenings that addressed sustainable agriculture, and how today's news production affects the way we see the world. To be continued!



Art, women and history at Geneva's Musée Rath

UN Geneva held an exhibition this year to bring international and local Geneva together in celebration of multilateralism and the values of the [United Nations Charter](#). The exhibition, entitled *Divers Égales Unis*, was held at Geneva's Musée Rath from 1 September to 10 October. It was organized in partnership with the D10 Art Space gallery, the City of Geneva, the Geneva Red Cross and the Lian Foundation.

The exhibition was made up of a number of components:

- Eighty-two artworks from UN Geneva's art collection, alongside a curated display by the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) with videos explaining the evolution of multilateralism and the role played by the special spirit of Geneva
- *Palais des Nations: A Time for Reflection*, which featured photographs of the Palais des Nations taken by UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya during the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020
- *Not A Woman's Job?*, an initiative of UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#)
- A selection of archives from the [Geneva Red Cross](#) and from its first woman president, Alice Favre
- An artistic project by the [Geneva University of Art and Design](#)
- Photographic portraits by Ana D. Lombard of women personalities of Geneva

For *Not a Woman's Job?*, permanent missions and permanent observer offices to the UN in Geneva were invited to submit photographic portraits showing women working in typically male-dominated fields. The project celebrated women who have helped break down deep-rooted gender stereotypes and have demonstrated that all jobs are for all people.

The photographs were initially displayed online, amassing nearly 40,000 views in the first weeks, before being exhibited as part of *Divers Égales Unis*. UN agencies and partner organizations in Geneva also contributed images showcasing projects and initiatives on the empowerment of women and gender equality.



Not a Woman's Job? portraits displayed in the *Divers Égales Unis* exhibition



Visitors at the *Divers Égales Unis* exhibition



Visitors at the *Divers Égales Unis* exhibition at Geneva's Musée Rath



A visitor to the exhibition surveys artworks from UN Geneva's art collection



Artworks exhibited as part of *Divers Égales Unis*



A visitor to the exhibition views a painting from UN Geneva's art collection



Artworks on display at the *Divers Égales Unis* exhibition

Images of the Palais des Nations displayed across Geneva

In March 2020, the halls of the Palais des Nations fell temporarily quiet in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown and switch to telecommuting. It was during that time that UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya took the opportunity to walk through the iconic buildings without the usual hustle and bustle. She soaked in the architecture and reflected on the contribution of the Palais to diplomacy over the years.

Seeing the Palais des Nations in this way, she decided to capture it through a series of black-and-white photographs. After sharing them with colleagues to show how different the Palais looked, Ms. Valovaya was then invited to exhibit them publicly.

An exhibition titled *Palais des Nations: A Time for Reflection*, organized by UN Geneva's Perception Change Project and the Centre de la photographie Genève, was held from 24 February to 17 March at 160 outdoor locations around Geneva. Seventeen black-and-white photographs taken by Ms. Valovaya were showcased to share with the public the beauty and history of the Palais.

“During the confinement, the Palais was empty but I never had the impression that it was abandoned. On the contrary, I think that its walls convey an encouraging message because so many events took place there, so many challenges were overcome. When you become aware of this, then you can tell yourself that we will also find solutions to our current issues.”

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya



Scan the QR code to read an [interview](#) in French that Ms. Valovaya gave at the time of the exhibition.

The artwork *Ecce Homo II* in the Palais des Nations is seen in a new light during the first COVID-19 lockdown, in March 2020.



UN Photo: Tatiana Valovaya

The iconic Salle des pas perdus captured by UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya during the first COVID-19 lockdown



UN Photo: Tatiana Valovaya

L'Oiseau bleu at UN Geneva

As the historic Palais des Nations undergoes renovation, a temporary facility – Tempus – has been built in the grounds of the Palais to host multilateral conferences. In 2021, two large-scale canvasses were added to the exterior of the building to represent [Sustainable Development Goal 17 on partnerships for the Goals](#), and specifically, the importance of strengthening partnerships between Governments, civil society and the private sector.

L'Oiseau bleu, conceived by [Collectif 1m83 Art](#) and UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#), is composed of five images created by Japanese photographer Yoshinori Mizutani. The installations depict bright yellow birds, symbolizing a bright flight towards a better future. The artwork was inaugurated on 30 June and will be in place until 2024.

In October, the Perception Change Project, [Collectif 1m83 Art](#) and UN Geneva's visitor guides arranged for more than 350 students between the ages of 6 and 10 to be taken on a guided tour of the Palais des Nations, the *L'Oiseau bleu* canvasses being a primary focus of their visit. Through a sensory-driven experience, the children learned about the meaning of the artwork and its symbolism for the United Nations. The children rounded off their tour with an origami workshop, creating bird figures to be displayed in the Palais.

“Let us be inspired by these exceptional works of art and reflect on the role we must play in our own worlds to achieve sustainable development for a better future.”

UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya



Photo: Collectif 1m83 Art

One of the *L'Oiseau bleu* canvasses on the Tempus building



A close-up of one of the *L'Oiseau bleu* canvasses

Photo: Collectif 1m83 Art



One of the *L'Oiseau bleu* canvasses on the side of the Tempus building

Photo: Collectif 1m83 Art



Students tour the Palais des Nations and visit the *L'Oiseau bleu* canvasses adorning the Tempus building.

UN Photo: Niccolò Ventura

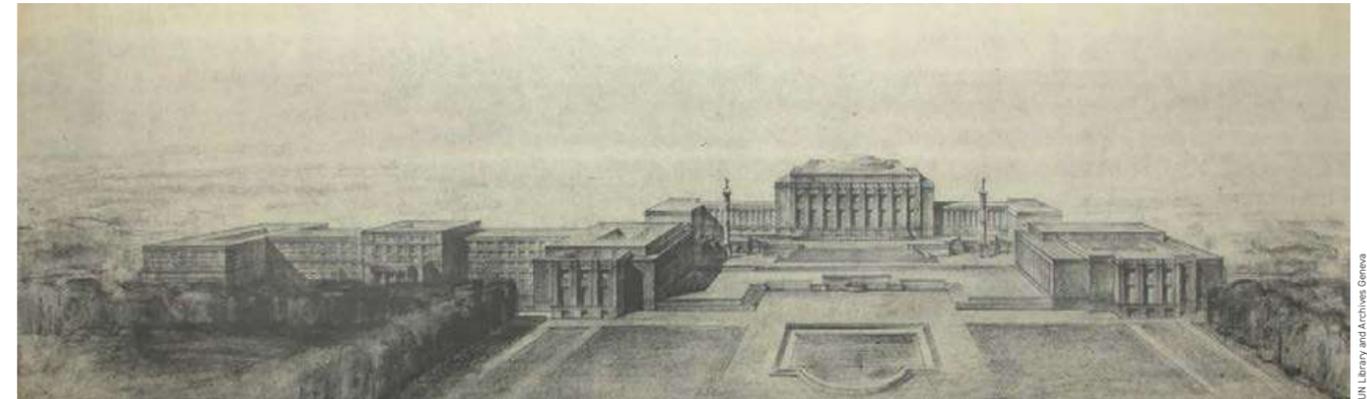


Students create origami birds during their visit to the Palais des Nations and the *L'Oiseau bleu* canvasses.

UN Photo: Niccolò Ventura

HiSTORIES: the history of the Palais des Nations

Drawing of the project for the Palais des Nations



UN Library and Archives Geneva



Scan the QR code to watch the *HiSTORIES* episode on the Palais des Nations.



Scan the QR code to access all the *HiSTORIES* episodes.

The Palais des Nations is part of the daily working life of UN Geneva staff members, diplomats, civil society representatives, journalists, and many more. But when was it built? What are the architectural features? Where does the interior decoration come from?

An episode of the *HiSTORIES* series, released in July, shone a light on the heritage of the Palais des Nations and its special connection with multilateralism. It retraced the construction of the iconic building, from the launch of the international architectural competition in 1926 to the building's completion in 1938.

The *HiSTORIES* series explores key issues, events and personalities of our past based on documents from the League of Nations archives, which are managed and preserved by the UN Library and Archives Geneva. Other *HiSTORIES* topics in 2021 included the life of the peace activist and first female recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Bertha von Suttner, and how to use UN Geneva's new online archives platform to research multilateralism.

Heritage protection as part of the Strategic Heritage Plan: renovation of Room 11

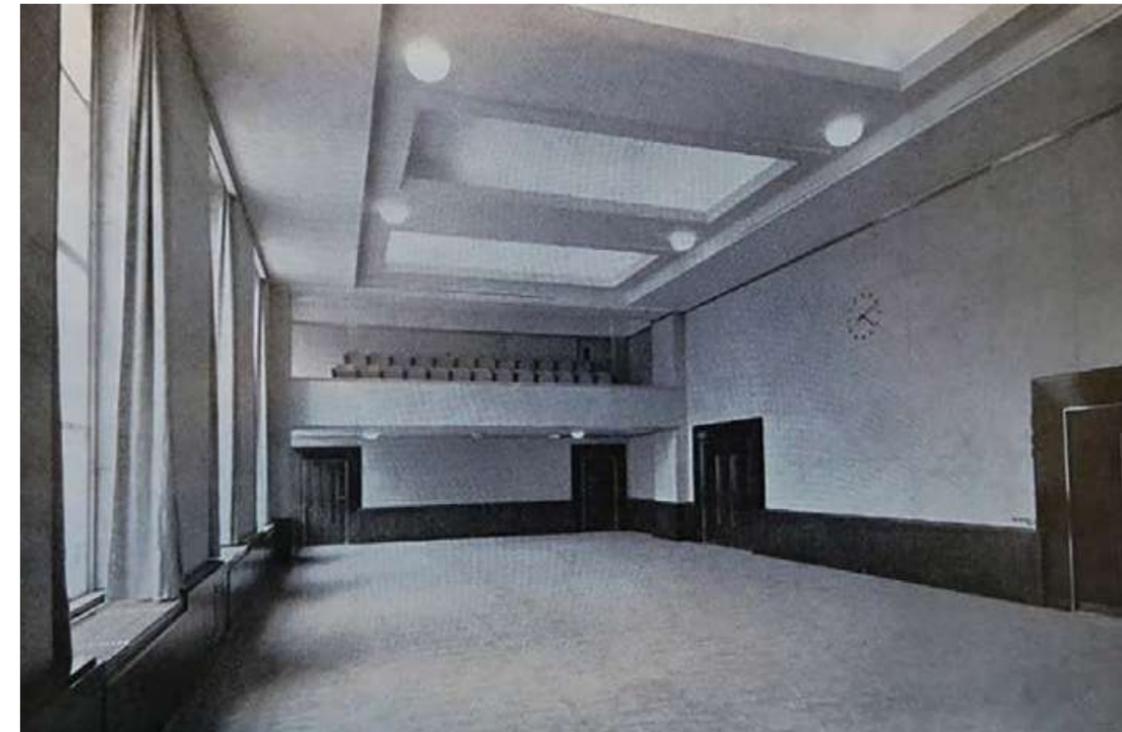
The protection and promotion of heritage is a key objective of the Strategic Heritage Plan. One example of these efforts is the interior design of Room 11.

Room 11 was the work of an architect from the Netherlands, Julius Luthmann, who also designed the office of the Director-General at UN Geneva, formerly the office of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. The room was a donation from the Netherlands and decoration work was carried out by H.P. Mutters and Son of The Hague.

Under the Strategic Heritage Plan, the major renovation works to Room 11 will include making it fully accessible to persons with disabilities. This will involve relocation of the interpreters' booths from one side to the other in order to give lift access to the upper

floor for persons with reduced mobility, automatic doors at the entrance and the podium, and three desks adapted for wheelchair users. New audiovisual and conferencing systems will be installed and will include new webcasting cameras and a new technical room.

Room 11 is filled with leather panels. Before work on the restoration of the room began, the state of the leather panels, and their mounting system on the walls, were carefully studied. Most of the panels were in very good condition, except those located near the windows, where heat variations and light had caused some degradation. Those panels will be repaired, while the others will be reused as they are. At the end of the renovation works, the leather panels will be reinstalled.



Room 11 in 1935

UN Photo UN Library and Archives Geneva



An initial concept drawing of Room 11

UN Library and Archives Geneva



Photo: Andrea Hoffmann



Photo: Andrea Hoffmann

Before the renovation works began

Before the renovation



Before the renovation works began



An example of damage to the leather panels due to exposure to light and heat, as a result of their proximity to a window



Before the renovation works began, three panels were removed to study their construction and mounting; each panel is numbered on the back.



Following removal of the leather panels, white protective sheets were placed on the wooden panelling below.



The panels are stored carefully during the renovation works.

Restoring the historic Villa la Pelouse

Nestled on the north-eastern side of the Palais des Nations campus is a once run-down old villa with a rich history – la Pelouse. In its glory days, queens, kings and nobles as well as UN Secretaries-General and Directors-General sipped their tea, talked, danced and lived there.

With the building in disrepair, UN Geneva launched a renovation project in 2020 to bring the former splendour of this treasure back to life, and in the process made many discoveries. Analysis of the original materials revealed that Villa la Pelouse had been a prestigious 19th century mansion, with black-and-white marble floors in the entranceway, historic parquet in most of the rooms, and walls embellished with decorative detail and mint-green woodwork.

In renovating the villa, UN Geneva sought to accentuate the elements of historical value, patiently restoring and protecting what had been hidden or battered over time. Non-original elements were given a contemporary touch to avoid any inconsistencies between different historical periods. The overall design of the restored villa is simple and monolithic, giving prominence to what “was there”; never overpowering the past, but accompanying it into the present day. Through this project, completed in 2021, Villa la Pelouse can continue to accumulate a rich history and serve many generations to come.



A renovated staircase in Villa La Pelouse



An antique stove
inside the renovated
Villa La Pelouse

UN Photo: Marija Potocnik



A meeting room
inside Villa La
Pelouse

UN Photo: Marija Potocnik

Preserving institutional memory during renovations

The move out of older offices to newly constructed spaces at the Palais des Nations as part of the [Strategic Heritage Plan](#) has afforded UN Geneva a valuable opportunity to access, appraise and preserve records that had long been housed in offices and storerooms.

Thanks to widespread, hands-on records management initiatives before and during the moving process, UN Geneva's archives grew by 700 linear metres in 2021 – more than twice as much as in previous annual transfers. The transfer of records and archives to the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) will not only ensure their preservation and accessibility, but also enrich the institutional memory of the organization.

For the UN Library and Archives Geneva, this meant mapping its paper collections, in preparation for a temporary closure and renovation of its storage areas. The collections consist of a unique blend of League of Nations archives, official United Nations records, academic books, publications by United Nations entities, and donations from governments, scholars and staff members. They reflect the interests and the work of the Organization throughout its existence, and provide a historical perspective on political, economic, social and human rights issues, enabling staff, diplomats and others to make informed decisions now and in the future.

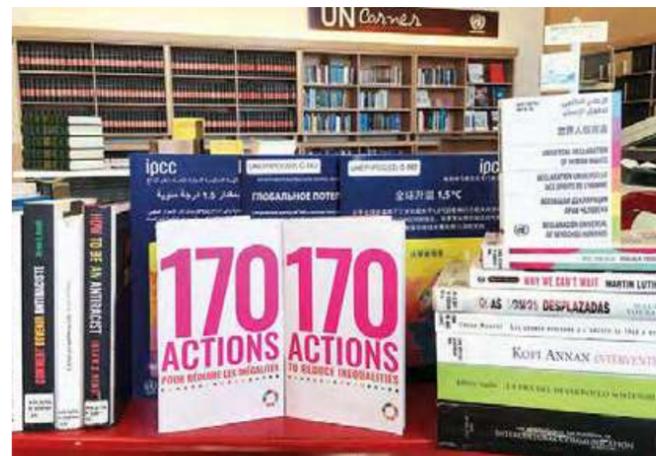


A UN Geneva staff
member retrieves
records from one of the
Library and Archives
repositories.

UN Photo: Ayni Lima

History in six official languages and more: UN Library and Archives Geneva

Did you know that the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) offers resources in 189 languages? The League of Nations Library – the predecessor to the current UN Library and Archives Geneva – aimed to develop a multilingual and multicultural collection ever since it was founded in 1919. The Library and Archives has built upon the heritage received from the League of Nations Library and now offers over 1.5 million physical volumes, 4 million UN documents and numerous digital resources in the six official languages of the UN as well as in many other languages. From essays on peace written in Latin in the 16th century, to first editions by renowned thinkers on economics and law, to UN reports on human rights, disarmament and climate change, to encyclopedias, dictionaries, academic journals and international newspapers, the extensive collection encompasses a rich history of international developments in multiple languages.



Multilingual publications at the UN Library and Archives Geneva



Scan the QR code to discover everything the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) has to offer.

Online access to the League of Nations archives

In November, UN Geneva launched a new online archives platform to provide truly global access to UN records and the archives of the [League of Nations](#). This includes content produced under the remarkable [Total Digital Access to the League of Nations Archives](#) project, through which we are digitizing all 15 million pages of the League's archives. The project will be completed in 2022.

The new platform provides state-of-the-art search functionality for users and is a cornerstone to providing archive access to the global community. It has received positive feedback, with researchers commenting on the benefits of providing access to the whole spectrum of the archives, which are critical to understanding the development of contemporary multilateralism.



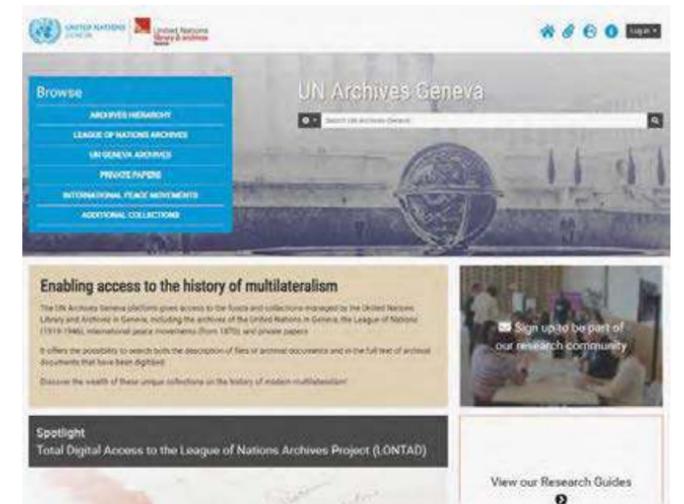
Scan the QR code to access the new [UN Archives Geneva platform](#).



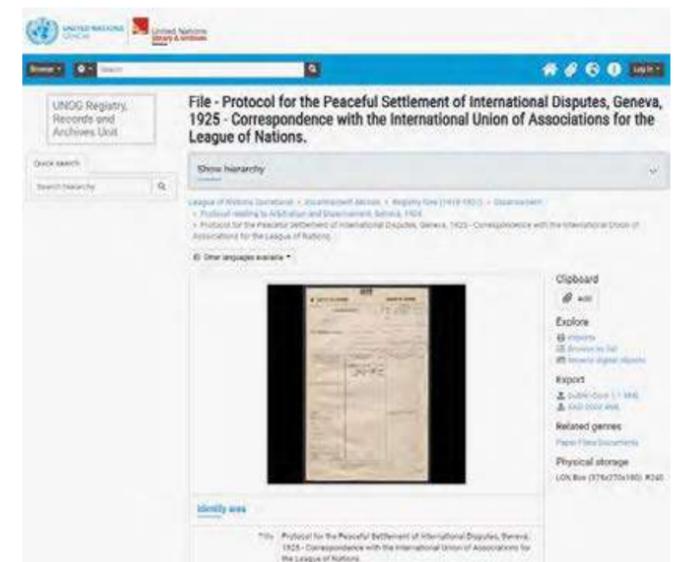
Scan the QR code to watch a [HiSTORIES](#) episode on using the new online platform.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the [Total Digital Access to the League of Nations Archives project](#).



The new online platform



Search results on the new online platform

Twentieth anniversary of the United Nations receiving the Nobel Peace Prize

In 2001, the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, were awarded the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) for their efforts in contributing to “a better organized and more peaceful world”.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the award and to build greater awareness about the United Nations and Kofi Annan, UN Geneva produced a [series of videos](#). A range of people were interviewed for the series, including young professionals currently working for the United Nations, staff who were working for the Organization in 2001, and colleagues of Mr. Annan. Combining anecdotes, recollections, and personal impressions, the interviews give an insight into Mr. Annan and his legacy, and shine a light on what the United Nations has accomplished in the past 20 years and what still needs to be achieved.



Scan the QR code to watch the [series of interviews](#).



The Nobel Peace Prize medal and certificate awarded to Kofi Annan are displayed in the UN Museum Geneva.

UN Photo: Pierre-Etienne Boumelet

Reggae music: a way to remember slavery

On 23 September, the [United Nations Information Service in Geneva](#) held a panel discussion entitled “Reggae as an Instrument of the Collective Memory of Slavery”. It followed a high-level meeting at the General Assembly on reparations, racial justice and equality for people of African descent – a meeting marking the twentieth anniversary of the [World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance](#) held in Durban, South Africa.

The UN Geneva event focused on the close ties that reggae music has not only with Jamaica, but also with Africa and, more specifically, to slavery. Experts on the discussion panel approached the subject from the perspectives of both musicology and history. Sharing theoretical contributions, musical extracts and accounts of lived experiences, the panellists showed how [reggae](#) – included in 2018 on the [UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#) – contributes to shaping and transmitting the collective memory of people of African descent around the world.

The speakers included Ibrahima Guissé, a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Mona Rishmawi, the Chief of the Rule of Law, Equality and Non-Discrimination Branch of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Marc Ismail, a historian and teacher, and creator of the independent label Soul of Anbessa; Giulia Bonacci, a historian and researcher at the Institute of Research for Development, University of Côte d’Azur; Mathias Liengme, a musicologist; Carol Simpson, a lawyer and expert in intellectual property law; and Warren Wallace, a teacher and the president of the Jamaica Association in Switzerland.

The event was held at the [Musée d’ethnographie de Genève](#) and was webcast live on UN Web TV and Facebook.



Scan the QR code to watch a [video recording](#) of this event.



5

Chapter five

A centre for learning and development



Managing teams in the next normal: from disruption to choice

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on workplace trends, and it is clear that returning to “the way things were” is both out of reach and undesirable. UN Geneva and the #NewWork team have been collaborating to support the new workplace models that are emerging as a result.

During the pandemic, telecommuting has generally worked well for both staff and managers. Surveys of UN Geneva managers and of client offices, conducted in 2020 and 2021, showed that it had contributed to an improved work-life balance for many colleagues, among other benefits. The discretion given to managers to find and decide upon what works best for their teams, instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, also generated positive feedback.

In 2021, UN Geneva and #NewWork developed a new training programme entitled “Managing Teams in the Next Normal: From Disruption to Choice”. The programme is designed to support team leaders in dealing with uncertainty, to provide them with ideas and practical tips to operate in the workplace of the future, and to augment their understanding of their changing role in the “next normal”.



This image of an umbrella illustrates the different concepts, training courses and types of support that are available to managers and staff to help them navigate a rapidly changing environment.

What is #NewWork?

#NewWork is a global staff-driven initiative that originated in Geneva with the support of UN Geneva management, and is aimed at changing our workplace culture and creating “the UN we want”. Drawing on staff feedback, #NewWork articulates a vision, goals and an action plan to achieve a collaborative environment, empowered networks of staff, an organization that is fit for the future, a culture of innovation and a flexible working environment. From driving adoption of collaborative technologies and new meeting techniques, to launching innovation events, improving our service to clients and promoting flexible working arrangements, #NewWork has already delivered many positive changes to the way we work.



Hearing staff voices as we reimagine the “next normal”

Hearing from staff and giving them an opportunity to envision the “next normal” for the United Nations was the focus of a series of dialogues organized by the global #NewWork team. The “Reimagine the Next Normal Dialogues” elicited staff views about the type of organizational culture they would like to see develop at the UN. The conversations delved into four themes that had been identified through staff feedback: hybrid teams, agile teams, digital literacy and tools, and innovation and a “dare to fail” culture.

More than 160 colleagues from 50 locations, including peacekeeping missions, took part, with a “randomizer” tool helping to ensure the discussion groups’ diversity. UN Geneva colleagues were part of the core group of organizers, helping to plan the global roll-out, and with communication, session moderation and analysis of the findings of the dialogues. The results will be fed back to key United Nations Secretariat management forums and global inter-agency forums, to help ensure that staff voices and ideas can be considered as the UN enters the post-COVID “normal”.

The “Reimagine the Next Normal Dialogues” won an award in the staff engagement category at the annual Career Development Roundtable, which brings together human resources professionals from international organizations around the globe.



An idea-sharing board on digital literacy and tools

Career Tips Thursdays

Mindful of the importance of career fulfilment to staff, this year UN Geneva launched a new series of interactive monthly sessions on career-related topics. These one-hour sessions, known as Career Tips Thursdays, are presented by experts from UN Geneva's recruitment team and its Centre for Learning and Multilingualism, and provide tips, guidance and insights for career and professional development. The topics this year included understanding a UN job announcement, writing an effective application, preparing for competency-based interviews, and networking.

More than 700 people have taken part in the sessions and provided very positive feedback on their usefulness. The series was immediately made available in other UN duty stations with the same or a similar time zone as UN Geneva, including UN offices and peacekeeping operations in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Future sessions will cover job-hunting in the UN system, awareness of personal and professional skills, strengths and competencies, and more.



Scan the QR code to learn more about Career Tips Thursdays and watch recordings of previous sessions.



conecta: a platform designed for cross-system collaboration

conecta is a platform designed to connect people with projects across the UN system. Staff members leading projects can find talented volunteers, while volunteers can find opportunities to develop their skills and widen their experience. A joint venture of UN Geneva's Centre for Learning and Multilingualism and Young UN: Agents for Change, conecta encourages collaboration and helps bring projects to fruition.

Since winning the global Reimagine the UN Together challenge – the “Dragons’ Den” in 2020, conecta has continued improving the platform's functionality as well as the user interface and experience. More than 800 people are now using the platform from a range of different UN system organizations and duty stations. As a next step, the conecta team is planning to launch engagement labs to understand users' experience and to guide continuous improvement.

As further inspiration and to encourage people to engage with the platform, in 2021 the conecta team organized an online event entitled “Managing Your Career in the Next Context”, held on 23 September with executive coach Paolo Gallo.



During the “Managing Your Career in the Next Context” online event, attendees received practical tips for their careers in a changing world of work.



Collaborating virtually to share knowledge at UN Geneva

The world of work continued to change rapidly in 2021. Accordingly, colleagues from across UN Geneva collaborated to produce live virtual events dedicated to sharing knowledge on topics critical to the future of work.

Through the Knowledge and Learning Commons – a space for diplomats as well as staff and interns from across the Geneva-based international organizations to collaborate and learn – experts and practitioners shared insights and engaged participants in discussion. The topics included technology and innovation, virtual accessibility, gender equality in organizations, information literacy, well-being at work and the future of conferencing. The aim of these sessions is to deepen the knowledge of everyone taking part and strengthen their capacity to adapt to an evolving world.

The Knowledge and Learning Commons held 50 virtual sessions in 2021, with 3,355 participants from Geneva and duty stations across the world. Furthermore, the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) worked to enrich knowledge-sharing by means of new tools and technologies, such as online tutorials, hybrid collaborations and live events.

Virtual learning also continued via the Library's *The Next Page* podcast, which is designed to advance the conversation on multilateralism. Twenty-five episodes were released in 2021, with guests exploring topics ranging from diversity in youth voices, to women in technology, to the history of multilateralism, to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).



Scan the QR code to learn more about the [activities](#) of the Knowledge and Learning Commons in 2021.



UN Photo: Namron Deep Jain

Members of the Knowledge and Learning Commons team work to broadcast an event.



UN Photo: Zhang Ning

A Knowledge and Learning Commons virtual event is broadcast from the Library Events Room.

Peer-to-peer learning: a startup guide is here!

Peer-to-peer learning – when colleagues teach other colleagues – is a useful tool for knowledge-sharing. UN Geneva has found that it can increase staff expertise and efficiency as well as overall professional development, while helping to foster a harmonious work environment and support the organization's goals for its work programmes.

In 2021, the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#) launched a quick and easy six-step [video guide](#) to help managers set up peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing in their teams. The video guide for managers assumes no prior experience with peer-to-peer learning programmes, but helps them to set one up and keep it running smoothly.



Scan the QR code to watch the [video guide](#).



A video guide helps managers set up peer-to-peer learning programmes.

Online language exams aligned with the United Nations Language Framework

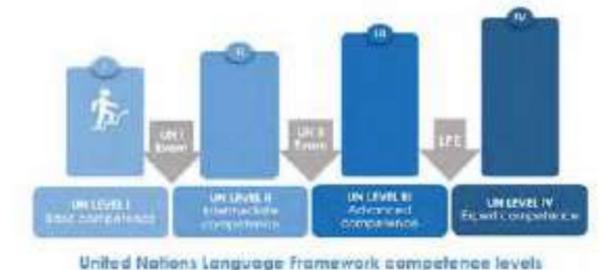
In 2021, staff from UN Geneva's language training programme worked closely with their counterparts at Headquarters to devise and pilot UN level I and UN level II examinations for the six official languages. These standardized exams, aligned to the United Nations Language Framework, test language ability. Successful candidates can be certified as having UN level I (basic) or UN level II (intermediate) competence. The new exams are intended to complement the already well-established Language Proficiency Examination, which corresponds to UN level III (advanced) and is currently the only official UN language exam that offers global certification.

The pilot exams are housed on a dedicated online platform and are designed in accordance with clear and detailed specifications. These specifications include guidelines for exam developers, so that new versions of the exam can be compared with previous versions.

Exam preparation materials were provided to candidates. Examiners received materials to help them administer the pilot exams. One hundred and seven volunteer candidates from the United Nations Secretariat, in various locations around the world, sat the pilot exams in 2021, and those who passed were presented with a certificate. The candidates also provided feedback that will be valuable for future initiatives to assess language skills.

What are the six official UN languages?

- Arabic
- French
- Chinese
- Russian
- English
- Spanish



The new level I and level II language exams are aligned with the United Nations Language Framework and complement the Language Proficiency Examination.

Using data science to transform human resources strategy

UN Geneva is committed to implementing the Secretary-General's [Data Strategy](#) and unlocking the potential for data to drive change across the Organization. One example of this is the use of data to support human resources strategy and decision-making.

This year, 30 UN Geneva personnel embarked on a learning journey to build capacity in human resources analytics and learn how to harness the power of data to improve operational efficiency, support strategy, and transform the human resources profession.

The staff members followed a one-year programme through the Academy to Innovate Human Resources. It consisted of learning about people analytics, with a different learning track for each of the four roles needed to build an analytics team: human resources analytics leader, human resources analyst, human

resources business partner and data scientist. Participants were awarded certification at the end of the programme and were given real-life projects to implement.

Going forward, UN Geneva intends to develop a human resources analytics strategy that is focused on improving the client experience. The specific areas covered will include the recruitment timeline, gender equality and diversity, workforce planning, absenteeism, well-being, entitlements monitoring, performance management, managerial effectiveness, and development of an optimal human resources client support structure.



UN Geneva staff collaborating

UN Photo: Matija Potocnik

UN Geneva co-creates training on innovation for senior UN system managers

The [Geneva Innovation Movement Association](#) is a network of change agents whose common goal is to break down silos and transform their organizations. To achieve this, the Association set up a cross-sector platform that supports innovative leaders and empowers them to share their experiences and transform knowledge into action.

In 2020, UN Geneva partnered with the Association and with the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#), the [International Labour Organization](#) and the [International Telecommunication Union](#) to co-create a training programme for senior UN system managers. The training consists of a multi-day set of workshops where participants work hands-on in cross-functional and cross-organizational teams to update their skills, behaviours and mindsets – enabling them to apply innovation methodologies in the context of humanitarian and development work.

This training and partnership with UN Geneva is now in its second year, and continues to engage senior leaders to build an empowered ecosystem around innovation. In 2021, the Geneva Innovation Movement Association migrated the training programme, offering it in a fully virtual setting, which has allowed more people to participate, including colleagues from field offices. This has both broadened and diversified the scope of the training, in line with its cross-functional and cross-organizational goals.



Photo: Geneva Innovation Movement Association

Leaders from UN Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Telecommunication Union and the International Labour Organization take part in a workshop on fostering an environment of innovation in the UN system.

Visitors' Service creates virtual tours

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the temporary closure of the Visitors' Service at UN Geneva in March 2020. In 2021, the Service was only able to reopen to the public in August. Throughout this unprecedented closure, tours for high-level visitors, officials and dignitaries continued but the bulk of the Service's activity came to a halt.

The closure provided, however, the Service with the opportunity to produce two virtual tours: one for a general audience and one specifically for youth. The virtual tours were developed by our tour guides, and in cooperation with the other UN Visitors' Services in Nairobi, New York and Vienna. The virtual tours, plus additional presentations and information, were translated into French and Spanish to maximize their reach and as part of UN Geneva's promotion of multilingualism. The virtual tours are available to the public upon request.

In 2021, the Visitors' Service also joined forces with the Strategic Heritage Plan team to develop and run special tours of the new Building H for UN Geneva staff.



UN Photo: Lang Meishi

A UN Geneva tour guide presents *The Temple of Heaven*, a Chinese tapestry, as a part of a virtual tour of the Palais des Nations.



Faced with the pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns, the Visitors' Service launched two virtual tours - one for general audiences and one for youth audiences.

Exchanging knowledge across continents

In 2021, at the suggestion of the Permanent Representative of Zambia, the UN Library and Archives Geneva launched a new forum connecting UN system libraries and Zambian academic librarians - the Knowledge Exchange Sessions.

Following an introductory session in May between the two groups, four successful exchanges were held in the remainder of the year. Twenty-five librarians shared ideas, insights, experiences and skills in two-way online discussions enabled by the new work culture of online meetings.

The UN Geneva team that supports the Knowledge Exchange Sessions values this collaborative opportunity and appreciates learning about knowledge and research needs in Africa. The team now aspires to create further opportunities and extend the exchanges to other librarians across the continent and in other parts of the world.



Flyer for one of the Knowledge Exchange Sessions

Are you part of the #UNGenevaReads community?

#UNGenevaReads, the book club of the [UN Library and Archives Geneva](#), gathers together a community of staff, diplomats and members of the public to discuss books and learn about issues at the heart of UN Geneva's work. The title of a selected book is announced on social media, and followers are encouraged to read and reflect upon the book. Each of the quarterly readings is complemented by a set of additional resource materials and by an online event with the author and UN experts.

Reading selections this year focused on global cooperation, refugees, archives and human rights, and overcoming racism. Author Simon Anholt spoke online about his book on the benefits that come from cooperation between countries, and writer Isabel Allende sent a video message to discuss archives and human rights for an event with chief archivists and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. The United Nations Ombudsman, Shireen Dodson, the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, Pamela Coke-Hamilton, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mami Mizutori, held an online conversation around a book chosen to align with the work led by the Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations.



Author Isabel Allende addresses #UNGenevaReads participants in a video message for the event on archives and human rights.



Scan the QR code to find out more about [#UNGenevaReads](#).



The books read as part of #UNGenevaReads in 2021

Annexes



UN Geneva senior management team



Clemens M. Adams

Director, Division of Administration



Kira Kruglikova

Director, Division of Conference Management



David J. Mc Cuaig

Project Director, Strategic Heritage Plan



Radha Day

Chief of Service a.i., United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva
Deputy Secretary-General, Conference on Disarmament



Alessandra Vellucci

Director, United Nations Information Service



Francesco Pisano

Director, UN Library and Archives Geneva



Nadia Isler

Director, SDG Lab

The UN Geneva senior management team provides executive support to the Director-General in her functions as the representative of the Secretary-General in Switzerland, as executive head of the United Nations Office at Geneva and the designated official for security for Switzerland, as mandated in the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The team meets on a weekly basis to inform and advise the Director-General on priority issues, upcoming events and other high-level matters.



David A. Chikvaizde

Chef de Cabinet of the Director-General



Sergey Shaposhnikov

Chief of Protocol



Jorge Villanueva

Chief, Security and Safety Service



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Senior Political Affairs Officer, Office of the Director-General



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Head, Perception Change Project



Markus Schmidt

Senior Legal Adviser, Office of the Director-General

UN Geneva

The Director-General

- Chef de Cabinet of the Director-General
- Protocol and Liaison Service
- Political Affairs and Partnerships Section
- Legal Office
- NGO Liaison Unit
- SDG Lab
- Perception Change Project
- Mediation Support

Division of Administration

- 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

Strategic Heritage Plan

Information Service

- Press and External Relations Section
- UN News (Radio, Television, Webcast and Photos)
- Visitors' Service

Library and Archives

- Library Services Section
- Institutional Memory Section

Security and Safety Service

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

*Conference on Disarmament**

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SDG Lab

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* 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.

