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Chapter three

A centre for advocacy and outreach

UN Photo: Matja Potocnik



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

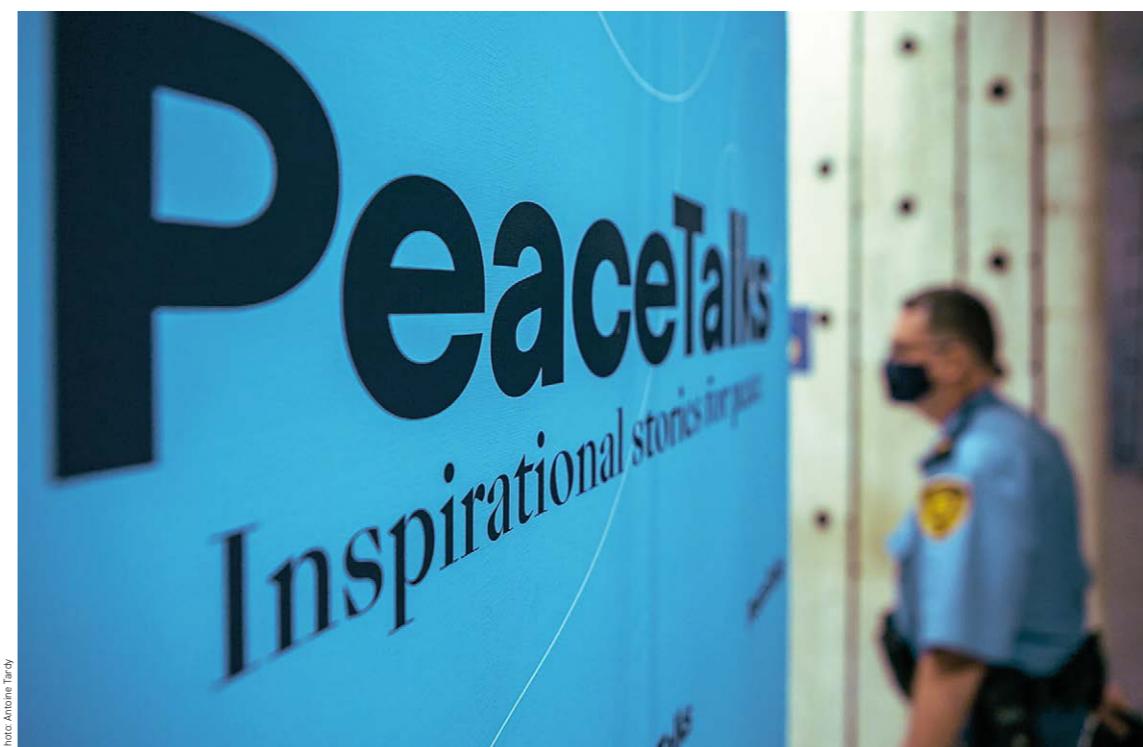


Photo Antoine Tardy

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

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.



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.



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 Martínez

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.

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.



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

"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.

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](#).



Children attend the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers ceremony.



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

UN Photo: Violaine Marin

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.



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

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](#).

Amplifying voices for gender equality

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

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



UN Photo: Mauro Bagetti

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](#).



A security officer raises the UN flag at an event in Ariana Park.
UN Photo: Jean Marc Ferré

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.



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."

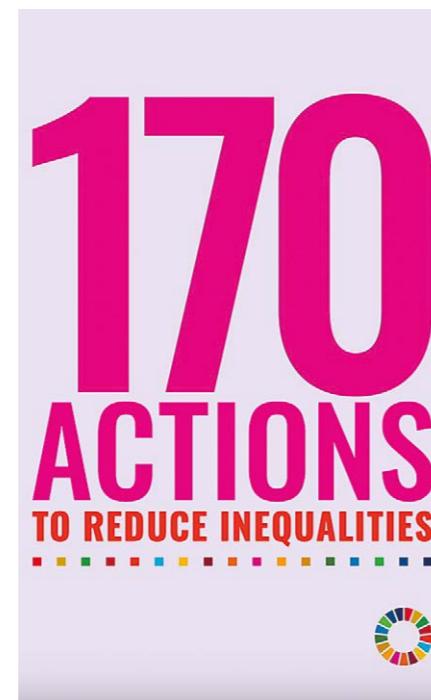
UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya

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, 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.



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



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

New children's book on gender equality

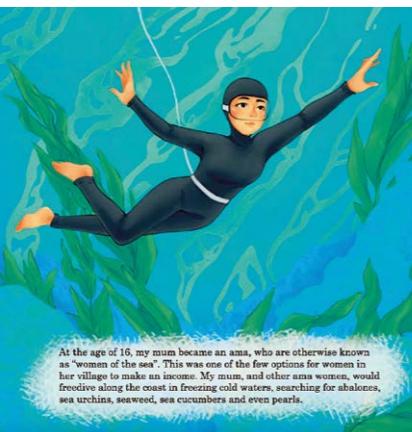
Sakura, a storybook for children on the topic of gender equality, was published in August by the Perception Change Project. It tells the story of a young girl with a dream of becoming a sushi chef in a country which traditionally believes that only men are fit for the job.

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.

ACTIVITY 1
Female Gender Stereotypes in Media

- Choose a random female character from a film or a story. Fill in the section below any female gender stereotypes you can see of your chosen character.
- Discuss with a partner if the gender stereotype of this character were removed or changed would the outcome of the story be different?
- Create new attributes below:
- Draw the redesigned character with new attributes.

Female Character

Appearance	Role
E.g. pretty, delicate, looks after children etc.	E.g. looks after children/other members of family, follows other than her own interests, depends on a man
Behaviour	
E.g. gentle, caring, nurturing, emotional, rational, most like a family	

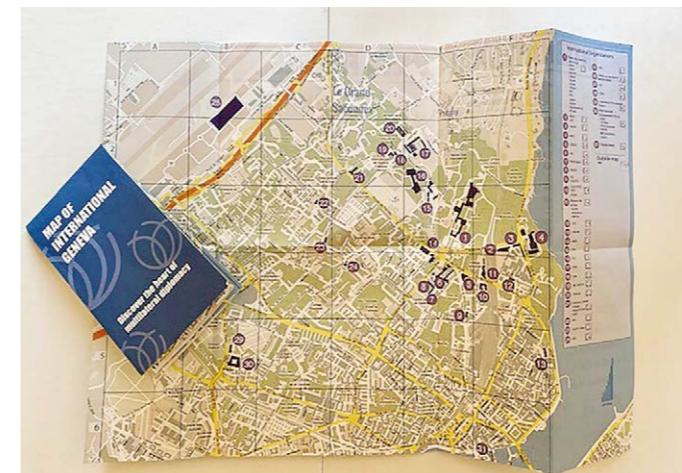
Adapted from: Day and Teach Series Teaching Resources

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

Pocket map of International Geneva

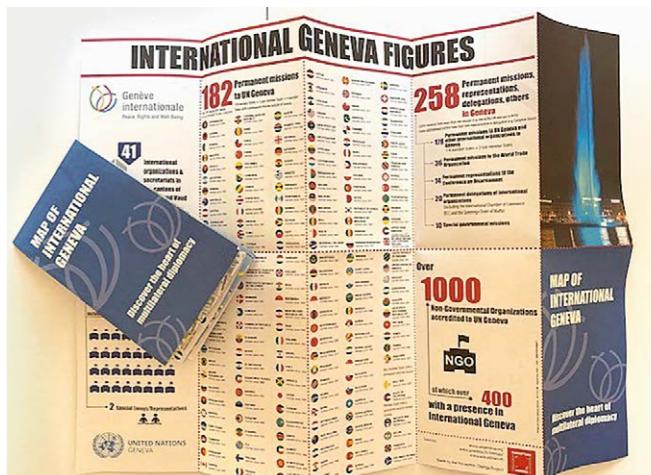
The small city of Geneva is densely populated with international organizations, permanent missions, non-governmental organizations and more. With an increasing demand to easily locate all these Geneva-based organizations, the Perception Change Project developed a pocket-sized map to be distributed to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



UN Photo François Vuillot

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



UN Photo François Vuillot

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.
UN Photo/Azizéh Poulet-Maillé

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.

Geneva Impact @Genev... · 05 mag · NEW

From protecting **#HumanRights** to negotiating **#trade** rules, the work done by the international organizations based in Geneva affects everyone's life, everywhere.

Through the drawings of the Swiss artist Zep, discover with us **#GenevaForYou** during the upcoming weeks.

 **#GenevaForYou**

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

Geneva Impact @GenevalImpact

We reached 10.000 of you!

Thank you for your interest in #InternationalGeneva!

Every organization based in #Geneva works for peace, rights and well-being for everyone, everywhere.

Keep following to know more about @GenevalImpact
bit.ly/3yvbRf5



#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.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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.

BEFORE YOU SHARE, THINK:

- ① WHO made it?
- ② WHAT is the source?
- ③ WHERE did it come from?
- ④ WHY are you sharing this?
- ⑤ WHEN was it published?

#TAKECAREBEFOREYOUShare



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!

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/Liang 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.



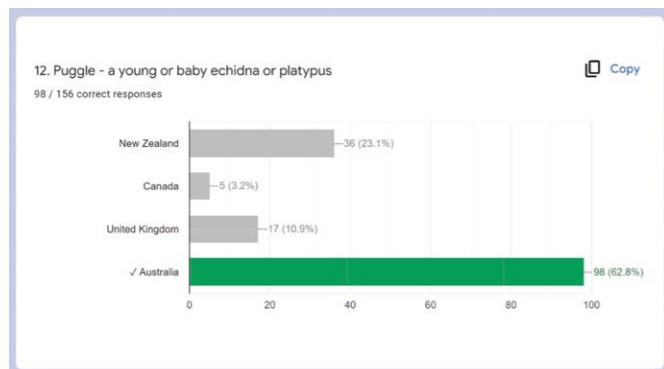
Scan the QR code to watch the [programme](#).



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.

challenging period as we work to build back better. Including provision of sign language interpretation in its meetings

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.

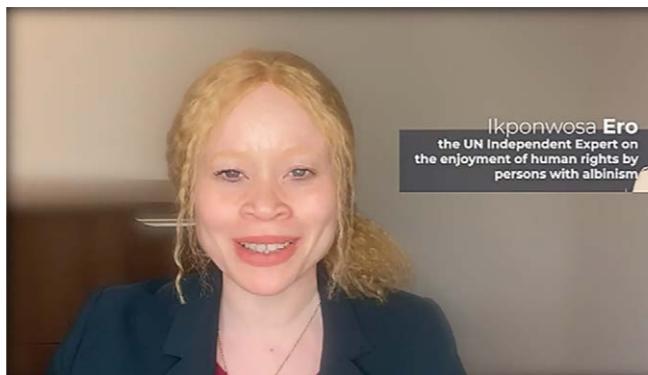


Scan the QR code to watch the [video message](#).

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](#).



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

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](#).

