

A stylized white graphic of a building with multiple windows, set against a solid green background. The building is composed of several white rectangular blocks of varying heights and widths, with dark green rectangular windows cut out. The top edge of the building is jagged, and the overall style is minimalist and modern.

Chapter 4

ENGAGING WITH YOUTH

Engaging with youth



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Participants in the 56th session of the International Law Seminar

RETURN OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW SEMINAR

After a two-year postponement due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 56th session of the International Law Seminar took place from 4 to 22 July at the Palais des Nations. Twenty-eight participants of various nationalities and from different regional groups took part in the programme.

Participants attended the plenary meetings of the International Law Commission and specially arranged lectures by Commission members and international law scholars, and visited international organizations. They took part in working groups on the topics of “reparation to individuals for gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law” and “subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law”.

International Law Commission member Charles C. Jalloh (left) and International Law Seminar coordinator Vittorio Mainetti (right) speak to participants during this year’s Seminar.



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What is the International Law Seminar?

The International Law Seminar takes place on an annual basis. It is designed for postgraduate students of international law, and young scholars, lawyers and government officials working in the field of international law, to widen their knowledge both of the work of the International Law Commission and of the codification and progressive development of international law. It also provides an opportunity for lawyers coming from different legal systems and cultures to exchange views regarding items on the agenda of the Commission.

UN Geneva held the first session of the International Law Seminar in 1965, in connection with the annual session of the International Law Commission. More than 1,300 young professionals in the field of international law have participated since then.

60TH JUBILEE OF THE GRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMME

It's the UN's longest-running educational initiative. Over the course of six decades, the [Graduate Study Programme](#) has welcomed thousands of young graduate students from over 100 countries, giving them insights into the work of International Geneva.

After two years of sessions held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 39 participants from 37 countries came together at the Palais des Nations in 2022 for the 60th Graduate Study Programme. For two weeks in July, the students heard from 35 speakers, a record number, who all addressed this year's theme: "Agenda 2030 at halfway: implementing the Sustainable Development Goals amidst global turbulence".

In addition to the plenary lectures, students worked in groups to focus on four specific Goals-related themes, under the guidance of UN moderators. Their conclusions and recommendations were published in a [compilation](#) available on the Graduate Study Programme's web page.

A special feature of the 60th Graduate Study Programme was a day trip to Bern, organized in cooperation with the [Federal Department of Foreign Affairs](#) of Switzerland. The class visited the Swiss Parliament, learned about Switzerland's work towards achieving the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), and enjoyed a guided tour of the old town. The end-of-course survey showed that 97.5% of the participants rated the Graduate Study Programme as "good" or "excellent" – a result that will be hard to beat in the coming years!

Scan the QR code to read the final group work prepared by the students from this year's Graduate Study Programme.



The students of the 60th Graduate Study Programme

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The President of the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, Leonardo Bencini, meets with youth representatives.

© UN PHOTO: MARIA KOROLEVA



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE NINTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

"Be ambitious!" was the message from the President of the Ninth Review Conference of the [Biological Weapons Convention](#), Leonardo Bencini, of Italy, to a group of over 30 youth representatives. During the Review Conference, which took place from 28 November to 16 December at the Palais des Nations, the youth representatives presented Mr. Bencini with [20 recommendations to strengthen the Convention](#).

The youth recommendations are a result of the [Youth for Biosecurity Initiative](#) of the Geneva branch of the [United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs \(UNODA\)](#). They were produced by representatives from a network of youth organizations supported by UNODA. The recommendations built on the [Youth Declaration for Biosecurity](#) – released at the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in November 2021 – which also came out of the Youth for Biosecurity Initiative.

Scan the QR code to read the youth representatives' recommendations.



YOUNG ACTIVISTS SUMMIT

Each year, the [Young Activists Summit](#) honours the outstanding achievements of young people who are working to make the world a better place, while also seeking to empower other young change-makers. Bringing together participants from all over the world, the Summit champions the crucial principles of peace, cultural tolerance and global cooperation.

On 2 December, UN Geneva, working with the non-governmental organization [dev.tv](#), [Radio Télévision Suisse](#) and its [Genève Vision](#) platform, and the [Geneva Graduate Institute](#), hosted the fourth Summit. Young people from 134 countries took part.

Six young activists were honoured at a live event at the Palais des Nations, which was followed by live conversations on Instagram. This year's Summit reached more than 8.2 million people around the world on social media.

The event provided the six young activists with a unique platform to raise awareness about their causes in the minds of youth and decision-makers. Each one of them also received a donation to advance their cause on the ground.

A full house for the 2022 Young Activists Summit at the Palais des Nations

The young activists featured were:

- 24-year-old Pashtana Durrani from Afghanistan, who strives to give girls access to education
- 19-year-old Zulaikha Patel from South Africa, who fights against racism
- 21-year-old Sebastián Benfeld from Chile, who is committed to a pollution-free environment and protecting environmental defenders
- 22-year-old C'est Prévüe Emmy Lusila from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who protects and provides shelter for children in street situations
- 26-year-old Keely Cat-Wells from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, who works to achieve disability inclusion in the entertainment industry and thereby to change mindsets
- 21-year-old Sameer Jha from the United States of America, who is working to make classrooms safer for LGBTQ+ students

Scan the QR code to watch a recording of the 2022 Young Activists Summit.



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The young activists honoured at the 2022 Summit with the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya (fourth from left), and Council of State of Geneva member Nathalie Fontanet (second from right)



“We, the adults, the older generation, came here to learn from you, young activists. To listen to you. And to understand how we can work together.”

TATIANA VALOVAYA

Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva



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YOUNG LEADERS AND PARTNERSHIPS AT UN GENEVA

On 2 September, more than 1,000 young people from some 140 countries participated in the joint opening session of the annual summits of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers and the Forum of Young Global Leaders. A hybrid event organized by UN Geneva and the World Economic Forum, it was at the same time one of the largest in-person events to take place at the Palais des Nations since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. UN Geneva had also previously hosted the 2016 and 2017 annual summits.

The Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, and the Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, Professor Klaus Schwab, addressed the high-energy audience and opened a panel discussion that highlighted key issues such as sustain-

able development, climate change and the important role of youth in the work of the United Nations. The panellists included Managing Director at the World Economic Forum, Adrian Monck, the Director of Partnerships at the Institute for Change Leaders, Maya Roy, the Regional Director for Africa at the International Committee of the Red Cross, Patrick Youssef, the Founder and Executive Chair of Janngo Capital, Fatoumata Ba, and the Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Beyond the Billion and The Billion Dollar Fund for Women, Sarah Chen-Spellings. After the panel discussion, Professor Schwab engaged the audience in an interactive discussion.

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The Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, Professor Klaus Schwab, and the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, during the annual summits of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers and the Forum of Young Global Leaders, at the Palais des Nations

“Youth is a great source of inspiration for the United Nations, and we need your courage and determination more than ever to address today’s challenges.”

TATIANA VALOVAYA

Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva

Strengthening the UN-Forum Strategic Partnership Framework

Through the UN-Forum Strategic Partnership Framework, signed in 2019, UN Geneva maintains close ties to the World Economic Forum. In 2022, the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, continued to be an active member of the Global Future Council on Frontier Risks, an interdisciplinary knowledge network dedicated to promoting innovative thinking to shape a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. She also participated in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, which took place from 22 to 26 May in Davos, Switzerland, where she contributed to various discussions around the theme “Working Together, Restoring Trust”.

Participants at the annual summits of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers and the Forum of Young Global Leaders



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The annual summits of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers and the Forum of Young Global Leaders at the Palais des Nations brought together more than 1,000 young people – both in person and online – from some 140 countries.



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Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, speaks about multilateralism at an event held at Sorbonne University in Paris.

EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION ON MULTILATERALISM: DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT SORBONNE UNIVERSITY

In March, the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, delivered a lecture at the prestigious Grand Amphithéâtre of Sorbonne University in Paris as part of UN Geneva’s outreach activities. During the event, which was coordinated by UN Geneva’s Perception Change Project, the Director-General addressed current global challenges and stressed the importance of effective multilateralism. Her conversation with 150 students highlighted the global role played by the Geneva ecosystem, and its high number of international actors working for peace, rights and well-being.

SCOUT'S HONOUR: UN GENEVA JOINS SWISS JAMBOREE

UN Geneva proudly participated in the Swiss Scouts’ national jamboree from 23 July to 6 August, in the Goms Valley in the Canton of Valais.

After a global pandemic that wreaked havoc on economies and saw inequalities spike, the opportunity was perfect for rekindling discussions about human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals with youth from every corner of our host country.

Staff from UN system organizations met young people face to face, talked about their work, and raised awareness about the need to defend and protect human rights as the foundation for achieving the Goals.

Close to 700 scouts attended a workshop on human rights, delivered in German, French and Italian, which focused on diversity and inclusion – one of the themes of the jamboree.

On the campsite’s main boulevard, a United Nations stand welcomed hundreds of scouts and other guests each day, who were eager to learn about the Goals and how to achieve them.

Geneva scout Lucia said that scouting could really contribute to the Goals. “We have a lot we can do to help. If we all just grab a project, I’m sure we can really push the Goals forward. It’s very important we work from our local communities, while always thinking globally,” she said.

Thomas Hirt, from the jamboree organizing committee, said the UN’s presence was appreciated because of the values the two organizations share. “The Goals are really close to our hearts as scouts. We are close to nature, we want to live with nature, and we want to live together in peace. We were honoured to have the UN to answer young people’s questions and [help them] learn through various activities, because that’s also at the core of scouting – learning by doing.”

Scan the QR code to watch a short video about the UN’s participation in the Swiss Scouts’ national jamboree.



© UN PHOTO: ALI KHAFFANE

The UN stand at the Swiss Scouts’ national jamboree



© UN PHOTO: ALI KHAFFANE

Scouts learn about the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN stand.



© SWISS GUIDE AND SCOUT MOVEMENT/THOMAS HIRST

Celebrating diversity and inclusion at the jamboree

UN@SCHOOL AND YOUNG REPORTERS AT THE UN

UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#), together with the [Eduki Foundation](#), organizes the youth outreach programme UN@School to help students better understand the work of the United Nations.

Launched on the 75th anniversary of the UN in 2020 as a series of conversations between students and representatives of Geneva-based international organizations, UN@School has continued to bring International Geneva closer to students. This year, 229 students from Swiss schools engaged with the programme, in nine sessions. The students, aged from 17 to 19, heard presentations and took part in discussions with representatives of International Geneva on topics such as the UN system, the Human Rights Council, disinformation and Internet governance.

In collaboration with the Eduki Foundation and the [United Nations Information Service in Geneva](#), the Perception Change Project also held two sessions of the Young Reporters at the UN programme, during which 65 students visited the Palais des Nations and played the role of journalists, interviewing experts from international organizations.

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Young Reporters at the UN



The Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, and the author of *Start Doing Good*, Mara Catherine Harvey, speak with children at the International School of Geneva.

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A NEW PUBLICATION ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: *START DOING GOOD*

How can we make the world more sustainable? How can we solve global challenges? How can each and every one of us make a difference?

These are all important questions which are answered in the rhyming children's book *Start Doing Good*. The book makes it easy for children to learn the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) in the same way as they learn their ABCs.

Start Doing Good was produced as a partnership between UN Geneva's [Perception Change Project](#), author Mara Catherine Harvey and illustrator Mariajosé Gajate Molina. The book is available as a printed version and online in both [English](#) and [French](#).

In October, *Start Doing Good* was presented by the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, to students aged 6 and 7 at the International School of Geneva. Following a reading by the author, the students spoke with the Director-General about the Sustainable Development Goals and small actions that everyone can take to make their life more sustainable. Every student also received a copy of the publication.



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Start Doing Good, an easy-to-read and compelling storybook for children about the Sustainable Development Goals

Scan the QR code to view the book in English.



Scan the QR code to view the book in French.





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The winners of the children's drawing competition on the theme of "Making a world that includes persons with disabilities"

END-OF-YEAR EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

UN Geneva's Perception Change Project held an art exhibition at the Palais des Nations. The works on display had been created by children as part of two earlier initiatives: the "Draw a better future together" project by the Perception Change Project and the "Making a world that includes persons with disabilities" exhibition by UN Geneva's Disability Inclusion Team. The exhibition featured 55 artworks as part of efforts to promote inclusion and showcase children's ideas for a better future for all.



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One of the proud winners of the competition poses with Council of State of Geneva member Thierry Apothéloz; the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya; the President of the Human Rights Council, Federico Villegas; and the Director of the Division of Conference Management at the UN Office at Geneva and focal point for disability inclusion, Kira Kruglikova.

UNITED FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION, THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN

This year, to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, UN Geneva reached out to children aged from 8 to 15 in the local Geneva area and invited them to take part in a drawing competition with the theme "Making a world that includes persons with disabilities".

Thirty entries were selected to feature in an exhibition being held at UN Geneva for the month of December. The winning artists and their parents and teachers attended an awards ceremony with the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, the Director of the Division of Conference Management at the UN Office at Geneva and focal point for disability inclusion, Kira Kruglikova, the President of the Human Rights Council, Federico Villegas, and Council of State of Geneva member Thierry Apothéloz. After the ceremony, guests were invited to a reception kindly funded by the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia, followed by a guided tour of the Palais des Nations.

End-of-year children's art exhibition at the Palais des Nations



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