



CHAPTER TWO

STRENGTHENING OUR SERVICES

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, addresses the press ahead of the sixtieth anniversary celebration of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, serviced and hosted by UN Geneva.
©UN Photo: Pierre Albouy

Integrating diplomats into the Geneva disarmament community

In September, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Geneva branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) jointly hosted the fifth annual Disarmament Orientation Course. This two-week programme is designed to introduce newly arrived diplomats to the Geneva disarmament community, and to help them integrate into it. It serves as a vital platform for building expertise, fostering connections and strengthening multilateral disarmament efforts.

This year's course featured presentations by leading experts from UNIDIR and UNODA and by senior diplomats who had recently chaired key disarmament meetings. Participants gained first-hand insights into the Geneva-based disarmament landscape and engaged in discussions on pressing global security challenges.

In addition to theoretical knowledge, the course offered practical engagement with Geneva's disarmament ecosystem. Diplomats had the opportunity to meet the UNODA staff who would support them throughout their tenure and help them to navigate negotiations, conferences, working groups, and institutional processes. The course also facilitated peer-to-peer exchanges, enabling diplomats to connect with colleagues from around the world and build professional networks that will be instrumental in their work.

Given that many permanent missions in Geneva do not have specialized disarmament teams, the orientation course is an opportunity to equip participants with essential knowledge on key disarmament issues that they will encounter during their diplomatic careers. These issues include weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, outer space security, artificial intelligence, lethal autonomous weapons systems, and explosive weapons in populated areas.

This year, 37 diplomats from 31 States Members of the United Nations benefited from the programme, reflecting the continued commitment of the international community to strengthening diplomatic capacity for disarmament. By providing a solid foundation in both substance and process, the Disarmament Orientation Course plays a crucial role in preparing diplomats to contribute effectively to multilateral disarmament efforts.

Participants in and programme facilitators of the 2024 Disarmament Orientation Course gather for a photograph at the Palais des Nations.
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Pioneering solutions through adversity

Faced with challenging times this year, the UN Library and Archives Geneva showcased its resilience and innovative spirit to continue ensuring access to vital knowledge and resources.

Early in the year, the United Nations Secretariat worldwide was affected by a significant liquidity crisis. Economic measures were implemented across United Nations entities to mitigate the impact. At UN Geneva, one step taken was to temporarily relocate the library and archival operations to another building of the Palais des Nations between April and August in order to reduce building operation costs. The UN Library and Archives Geneva team swiftly adjusted and ensured business continuity, moving essential collections, re-establishing services and managing about 4,000 interactions with clients – both in person and virtually, through its website.

In May and June, the International Law Commission held its annual session at the Palais des Nations. As is the case every year, the members of the Commission significantly relied on specialized support from the staff of the UN Library and Archives Geneva. The team re-engineered its client service model to ensure uninterrupted support for the work of the Commission, navigating temporary relocation and logistical challenges with creativity and collaborative flair.

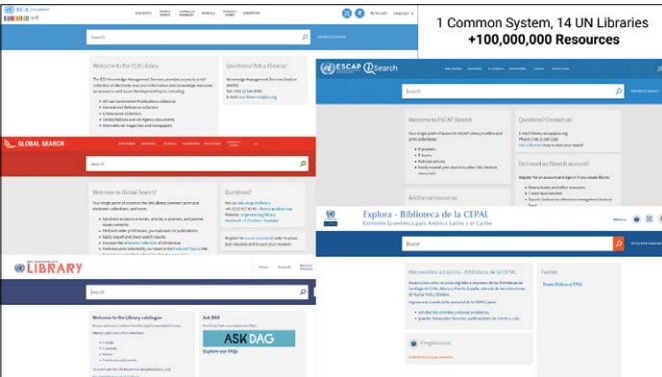
The UN Library and Archives Geneva team further streamlined access to information resources for users by ensuring the smooth and successful integration of the seven regional libraries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa into UN Geneva's common library management system. This addition expands the network of United Nations partner libraries to 14, allowing



Following the temporary closure of the Palais des Nations building in which the UN Library and Archives Geneva is housed, a reading room was created in the Delegates' Lounge, located in another historical building.
©UN Photo: UN Library and Archives Geneva

staff, delegates and the wider public to access more than 100 million digital information resources through a single platform – the Global Search tool. Supported by UN Geneva staff, the transition was seamless and efficient, reinforcing the commitment of the United Nations to cutting-edge information services.

These initiatives highlight UN Geneva's ability to innovate and adapt in the face of adversity. By combining technical expertise, resourcefulness and cooperation, UN Geneva continues to empower the global United Nations community, ensuring that knowledge on multilateralism is accessible to people around the world.



Fourteen United Nations libraries now use one common, state-of-the-art management system.

Attracting a diverse workforce



Throughout 2024, UN Geneva ramped up its efforts to attract diverse and skilled professionals by forging partnerships with educational institutions and actively engaging in international career days and employment support events. These outreach activities were led by UN Geneva's Human Resources Management Service and carried out in person around the world, reflecting UN Geneva's commitment to building a multicultural workforce rich in geographical and talent diversity.

In Switzerland, UN Geneva participated in four key events: the 2024 International Career Day, UN Career Days at the Geneva Graduate Institute, and two spousal-employment support events organized in partnership with the International Geneva Welcome Centre and the International Dual Career Network. UN Geneva also joined a career fair organized as part of the twentieth Career Development Roundtable in Lithuania, and participated in the fifth UN Job Fair held in China, alongside 20 other United Nations agencies, programmes and funds.

The Chief of the Human Resources Management Service, Nataliya Myronenko, and the Director of the Division of Conference Management, Rima Al-Chikh, traveled to China to visit translation and interpretation universities. They engaged with students and

A staff member from UN Geneva's Human Resources Management Service briefs a student interested in United Nations career opportunities during a career fair event.
©UN Photo

presented the different language careers at the United Nations and the role of language professionals in supporting intergovernmental processes. The pair also delivered keynote speeches during the 2024 conference held by the Conférence Internationale Permanente d'Instituts Universitaires de Traducteurs et Interprètes (CIUTI) in Shanghai, China.

Furthermore, UN Geneva partnered with the University for Peace in Costa Rica and IE University in Spain to deliver targeted training sessions for master's degree students. Staff members from the Human Resources Management Service provided guidance and advice on applying for employment at the United Nations. Together with students they explored the key skills, competencies and values sought after at the United Nations.

Collectively, these outreach events engaged over 7,000 people, equipping them with concrete insights on how to forge a professional path at the United Nations.

New four-legged recruits join the security team

In 2024, UN Geneva enhanced its security by expanding the DetEx K9 Unit of the Security and Safety Service with two new Labrador retrievers: Bridgette and Twix. They join other dogs in the team in strengthening security at the Palais des Nations, reflecting UN Geneva's commitment to preventive security measures.

The new dogs and their handlers underwent extensive training with the Geneva cantonal police. This training partnership ensured that the new team members were well versed in the latest detection and intervention techniques. Their specialized training enables rapid response to potential risks, adding an extra layer of protection that complements other protocols.

The DetEx K9 unit plays a crucial role in detecting potential threats and ensuring a safe environment for United Nations personnel, delegates and visitors. This expansion underscores UN Geneva's dedication to advanced and proactive security strategies.



Twix (left) and Bridgette (right) are the two newest members of the DetEx K9 Unit of the Security and Safety Service.
©UN Photo



Setting the standard for career and talent development

In October, UN Geneva's Human Resources Management Service took centre stage, winning two awards at the twentieth annual Career Development Roundtable in Vilnius. This annual global conference brings together international organizations from around the world and is aimed at fostering excellence, innovation and achievements in the field of human resources.

In 2024, four awards were given out, in the following categories:

- Innovation in Recruitment
- Employee Engagement
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Decade of Excellence – a special category this year to honour initiatives with lasting impact.

UN Geneva won the Employee Engagement award, for its Career Tips Thursday initiative, and also won the Decade of Excellence award, for its Programme for Emerging Women Leaders (EMERGE).

The Career Tips Thursday series was developed by UN Geneva in 2021 to increase career development guidance and support for staff. The sessions, held online, are designed to equip staff with valuable resources to manage their career trajectory within the United Nations system. The series has since grown and is now organized in partnership with other United Nations entities. The monthly sessions reach, on average, more than 1,000 staff members globally.

EMERGE is a joint initiative developed by UN Geneva and 10 other United Nations entities. Created in 2016, the programme is aimed at empowering women staff at the P3 level to expand their leadership skills and advance their career within the United Nations system. To date, 17 system entities have participated in six editions of this ambitious programme. Following the latest edition, organized in September, 77 per cent of the participants reported advancements in their career; 79 per cent of those obtained a promotion.

Beyond the awards, these initiatives stand out because of the spirit of co-creation and collaboration encouraged by UN Geneva. By joining forces and sharing expertise and information, UN Geneva and its partners are setting the standard for career and talent development across the United Nations system.



Members of UN Geneva's Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) receive the Employee Engagement award at the 2024 Career Development Roundtable in Vilnius. From left to right: Chief of the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism, Thomas Neufing; EMERGE Team Lead from the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism (Management and Communications Unit), Jesús Guerrero; EMERGE Team Lead from the Human Resources Management Service (Vacancy Management Unit), Valentina Cocco; and Chief of the Human Resources Management Service, Nataliya Myronenko. ©UN Photo

Embracing a forward-thinking culture with Modern Agile methodologies

In line with UN 2.0, the Secretary-General's vision for a modernized United Nations system, UN Geneva is actively taking steps towards a more forward-thinking culture that values agility, learning and curiosity. To do so, UN Geneva is applying Modern Agile methodologies to boost team performance, adaptability and resilience.

Since 2022, the Human Resources Management Service has offered four distinct training modules in that area:

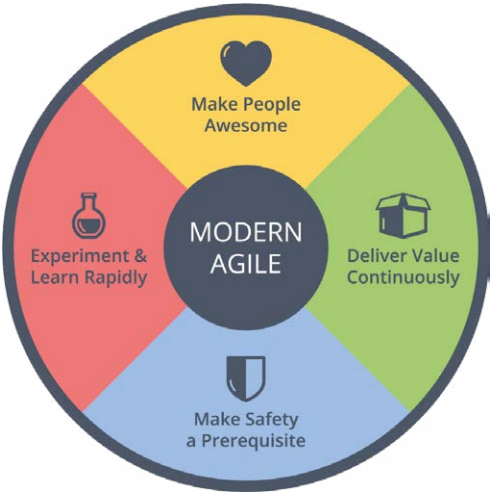
- Agile Mindset
- Priority Setting and Reduction
- Team Connection Points: Huddles and other meetings
- Iterations and Retrospectives

In 2024, 17 workshops, each covering a specific module, were held, reaching 206 participants and introducing the Modern Agile mindset, which thrives on uncertainty and complexity. Workshop moderators followed a flexible approach, allowing teams to choose the tools and techniques that best suited their needs. With robust support from colleagues in the Human Resources Management Service and targeted follow-up sessions, teams across the United Nations system are integrating these new ways of working in order to maximize their value and impact.

By embracing Modern Agile methodologies, UN Geneva is equipping itself to tackle the complexities of modern working environments and to deliver significant results, fostering a growth mindset in tandem with psychological safety and alongside a steady focus on end users. UN Geneva's teams are ready for the future. This transformation is not just about keeping up – it's about staying ahead.



Mercedes Rodriguez, Staff Development Assistant in UN Geneva's Human Resources Management Service (left), delivers a training session to UN Geneva colleagues on how to boost team performance. ©UN Photo



Wheel diagram representing the four principles of the Modern Agile methodology.

Commitment to quality in conference services

For many years, International Geneva, with UN Geneva at its heart, has been a prime venue for multilateral discussions, particularly thanks to its unique ecosystem of stakeholders and the prominent role it plays in a range of global issues. In this context, UN Geneva has gained significant experience in providing conference services, becoming a centre of excellence in conferencing. In 2024, 8,505 meetings were organized by UN Geneva’s [Division of Conference Management](#), 7,719 of which were held in person.

With such experience, UN Geneva has built a strong reputation as a quality service provider, which it continually seeks to improve. Feedback from meeting participants, including members of permanent missions, national delegations and client secretariats, is regularly collected through client surveys and is used to enhance service quality and support the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies meeting in Geneva and beyond.

A register of compliments and complaints allows UN Geneva to systematically review written feedback received from permanent missions and client secretariats, providing insights for further improvement. The Division of Conference Management, in coordination with its parent department, the [Department for General Assembly and Conference Management](#) (DGACM), also regularly conducts self-evaluations of key aspects of its operations. Results lead to actionable recommendations and targets for improvement, which are integrated into the annual work planning process.

In addition, global evaluations conducted by DGACM across all four duty stations help to enhance operations in Geneva. More than 40 standard operating procedures have been developed to streamline operations and ensure consistent service delivery. The Division of Conference Management is also involved in several global initiatives to upgrade DGACM’s tools, aimed at boosting service quality for Member States.

UN Geneva is also dedicated to high-quality translation and interpretation services to support seamless multilingual communication. Internal quality control mechanisms ensure that all interpretation services meet high standards. Interpreters are evaluated regularly, and future recruitment is influenced by their performance. Even with these rigorous controls, several challenges such as speech speed and sound quality continue to impact interpretation services.

On the translation side, the Division of Conference Management has implemented guidelines and employs advanced tools such as the United Nations computer-assisted translation interface (eLUNA) and the [Terminology Portal](#) (UNTERM), enabling continuous professional development and ensuring ongoing excellence in translation services.

Through continuous efforts, UN Geneva remains committed to delivering reliable, effective and multilingual conferencing services.



Conference room equipment is designed to ensure proper sound, allowing interpreters in the booth to deliver quality services.
©UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

Expanding digital innovations of meeting information

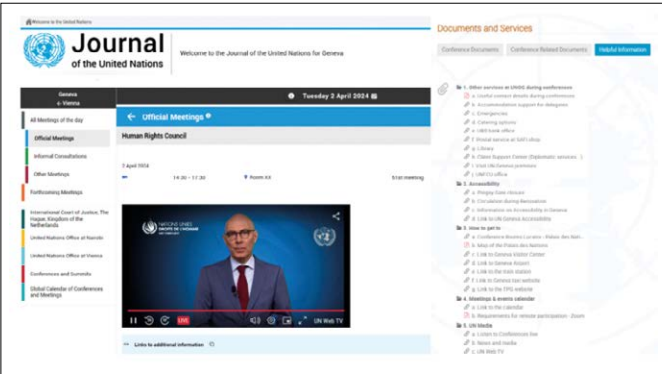
Digital Recordings Portal

In 2024, the scope of the Fully Automated Speech-to-Text (FAST) project was expanded, making transcripts of recent meetings held at UN Geneva available in all six official languages of the United Nations. Since 2019, the FAST project has provided searchable, machine-generated meeting transcripts to help delegates, United Nations staff and other participants capture important content, review meeting deliberations and report on outcomes.

In July, the [Digital Recordings Portal](#) on the UN Geneva website was updated to incorporate the FAST expansion and is now also available in all six official languages. The Portal is a permanent home for all transcripts of meetings. This development is part of a conscious effort by UN Geneva to cater better to a linguistically diverse audience, thereby fostering a greater global exchange of ideas and information.

Journal for Geneva

The *Journal of the United Nations* is an official United Nations publication that dates back to 1945. At that time, it was known as the *Journal of the Preparatory Commission* and was published daily as the Commission met in November and December 1945 to set the stage for the first sessions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In January 1946, when those bodies convened their first sessions, separate journals were published for each of them. In 1951, they were merged into one single *Journal of the United Nations*.



The daily *Journal* publications included programmes of meetings, the meeting agendas, summaries of previous meetings and lists of related documents; this is still the case today on the website of the *Journal of the United Nations*. For almost 80 years, the *Journal* has provided valuable, up-to-date coverage of the work of the United Nations.

In 2018, the multilingual website of the *Journal of the United Nations* was launched, covering the six official languages of the Organization. Since then, the website has been continuously improved, enabling readers to access all relevant information for meetings held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In April 2024, a new milestone was reached for the *Journal* with the expansion of its reach to encompass all four duty stations served by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. UN Geneva joined the launch and was added to the coverage list; information for all meetings taking place in Geneva can now be conveniently accessed alongside that of New York on the *Journal* website. As an added feature for users, the website has allocated webcast capability (when available) and a link to “Documents and Services”.

The global *Journal* is an invaluable resource for Member States, technical and substantive secretariats of intergovernmental meeting bodies, United Nations staff and the public at large.

Scan the QR code to access the [Journal of the United Nations](#).

The *Journal of the United Nations* is now available in all six official languages of the United Nations and across all four United Nations duty stations – Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna.

Streamlined security: the digital transformation of the Pregny Pavilion

In September 2024, following its renovation, the Pregny Pavilion marked the first anniversary of the implementation of UN Geneva's digital badging system. This cutting-edge system has revolutionized access control at the Palais des Nations by streamlining the registration and entry process for staff, visitors and delegates. Thanks to the integration of an enhanced preregistration system, waiting times at the gate have been significantly shortened, ensuring a smoother flow of people into the campus.

A central feature of the upgraded system is the installation of multiple X-ray scanners, guaranteeing thorough bag screening and further reinforcing security by detecting prohibited items more effectively. In addition, the installation of clear signage and digital information screens further improve the user experience, guiding visitors seamlessly through the entry process and reducing the need for assistance from security personnel.

These advancements not only boost efficiency but also heighten security standards for UN Geneva. By leveraging modern technology and optimizing existing infrastructure, the digital badging system has significantly enhanced overall safety and convenience when entering the Palais des Nations. Looking ahead, UN Geneva remains committed to regularly assessing and refining these systems to uphold the highest standards of security and operational excellence.

Scan the QR code to watch a [video](#) about the digital badging system.



The upgraded screening system at the Pregny Pavilion includes multiple X-ray scanners, enabling thorough and effective screening. ©UN Photo

Navigating the Palais des Nations: UN Geneva's new and accessible signs



Signage indicating the way to key locations around the Palais des Nations and estimated walking times were installed across the premises. ©UN Photo



The Braille orientation tables placed throughout the Palais des Nations campus include Braille labels, allowing individuals with visual impairments to find their way. ©UN Photo

With a campus that spans 6 hectares, it is not always easy to find your way around the Palais des Nations. In 2024, UN Geneva enhanced its wayfinding system in and outside the different buildings located on its campus, making it easier and quicker for delegates, visitors and staff to find their way.

New directional signage was installed outside to indicate the way to key locations around the premises and estimated walking times, allowing visitors to plan their routes more effectively. In addition, digital directory screens were placed inside each newly renovated building. These screens can be easily updated, thereby ensuring accurate information at all times. The numbering system for the conference rooms was also improved: to enhance readability and ease of navigation, all room signs now show Arabic numerals alongside the traditional Roman numerals.

In addition to general improvements, UN Geneva has taken significant steps to ensure that the Palais des Nations is accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. In collaboration with experts and users, new wheelchair-accessible pathways and entrances have been tested and implemented across the various buildings. A wayfinding path for individuals with visual impairments has been installed, providing a structured and safe route for them to independently navigate the Palais des Nations. UN Geneva has also placed Braille orientation tables at key points along this path. These detailed maps have been produced using a Braille embosser to tactually represent topographies, and sit alongside Braille labels to identify key features of the campus.

Through this new and improved system, UN Geneva wishes to offer all campus users an easy and enjoyable wayfinding experience at the Palais des Nations.

Scan the QR code to watch a [video](#) showcasing the newly installed Braille orientation tables.

Progress on the new Portail des Nations Visitor Centre

The Portail des Nations Visitor Centre will be UN Geneva’s new dedicated entry point and space for visitors. The Visitor Centre will serve to strengthen outreach efforts and will provide a unique opportunity for the public to learn about the United Nations family. This project was made possible by a generous donation from the Fondation Portail des Nations.

The construction of the Portail des Nations Visitor Centre, which includes several pavilions, began in April 2024. The first phase saw the completion of two pavilions dedicated to the user experience; construction of the third pavilion and the main building with the lobby is currently under way.



The construction site of the new Portail des Nations Visitor Centre, viewed from a crane.
©Charles Pictet Baptiste Broillet Architectes Associés

The visitor experience is being developed in close collaboration with various United Nations entities in Geneva. The Visitor Centre will feature three immersive rooms to offer visitors an engaging journey through the activities of the United Nations and their global impact. In the first room, visitors will hear Geneva-based United Nations experts presenting the workings of multilateral diplomacy and its direct impact on everyone’s lives. The second room will showcase inspiring stories of successful United Nations partnerships and initiatives. In the third room, visitors will be invited to participate in a simulated vote on a General Assembly resolution.

Once completed, the new Visitor Centre, alongside the existing guided tours of the Palais des Nations, will better enable the public to engage with the work of the United Nations. The opening of the Portail des Nations Visitor Centre is expected in early 2026.



The Portail des Nations Visitor Centre, shown here under construction, is expected to open in 2026.
©UN Photo: Charbel Jabbour

Reopening of the Secretariat Building

In September, the meticulous renovation works of the Secretariat Building, also known as Building S1, were completed, marking an important milestone for the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) project. The lean construction management methodology adopted in 2023 by the leaderships of both SHP and its contractor, Rénovation Palais des Nations, was instrumental in the efficient and successful renovation of the Secretariat Building, as well as related staff moves.

The Secretariat Building of the Palais des Nations was originally built in the 1930s to house the Secretariat of the League of Nations. In the late 1940s, the building became the European Office of the United Nations. Today, it remains a prominent part of the Palais des Nations and is home to over 900 staff.

In 2024, following the completion of the renovation of the Secretariat Building, a transition period commenced. This involved final testing and preparations carried out by UN Geneva colleagues from various services such as facilities management, conferencing support, and safety and security. This phase was completed in November; subsequently, United Nations staff, including from the Office of the Director-General of UN Geneva, the Geneva branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, the

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, moved into the newly renovated offices.

The Strategic Heritage Plan renovation project has an intricate task: modernizing the historic Palais des Nations and improving its safety and accessibility, all while preserving its original architecture and heritage. Therefore, a significant part of the renovation works of the Secretariat Building took place behind the scenes due to the constraints inherent in heritage preservation. Work undertaken included the replacement of the heating, plumbing and electrical systems, as well as the installation of fire protection systems. More visible works were also carried out, such as the creation of meeting spaces, hybrid offices for collaborative working, kitchens and lock-down and fire protection doors.



The Secretariat Building in the 1930s.
©UN Photo: UN Geneva Archives



The Office of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, located in the Secretariat Building, in the 1930s.
©UN Photo: UN Geneva Archives



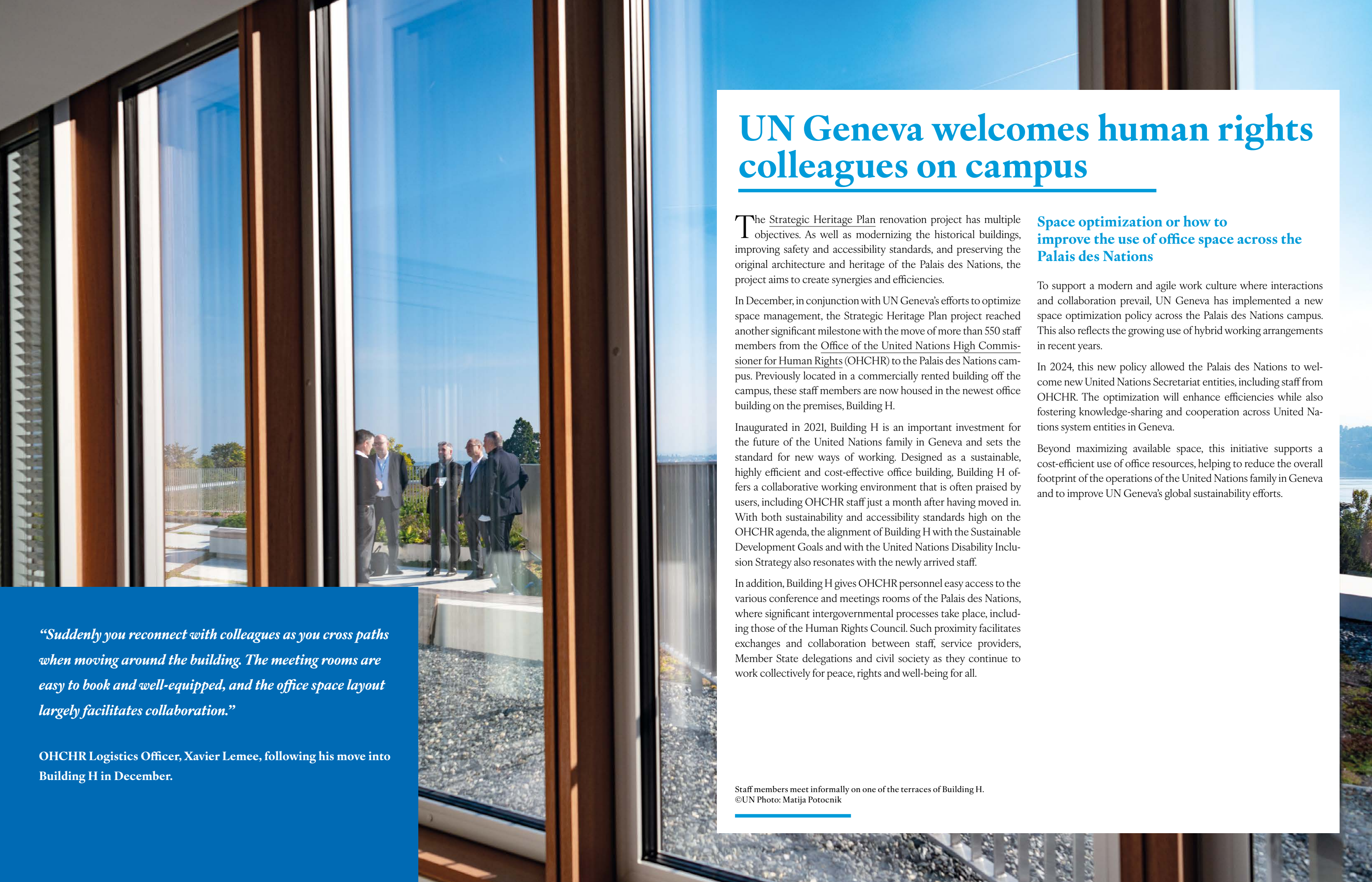
The Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, holds weekly meetings with her senior management team in her newly renovated office.
©UN Photo

The Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya (right), and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Anna Ifkovits Horner (left), cut a ribbon during a ceremony to mark the reopening of the Secretariat Building.
©UN Photo: Strategic Heritage Plan



“I am very proud of the SHP team and our UN Geneva colleagues for their dedication and hard work, which led to the completion of the renovation of Building S1. It is great to see the building buzzing with activity as it did before the start of the renovation.”

Strategic Heritage Plan Project Director, David McCuaig, at an event marking the reopening of the Secretariat Building.



UN Geneva welcomes human rights colleagues on campus

The Strategic Heritage Plan renovation project has multiple objectives. As well as modernizing the historical buildings, improving safety and accessibility standards, and preserving the original architecture and heritage of the Palais des Nations, the project aims to create synergies and efficiencies.

In December, in conjunction with UN Geneva's efforts to optimize space management, the Strategic Heritage Plan project reached another significant milestone with the move of more than 550 staff members from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the Palais des Nations campus. Previously located in a commercially rented building off the campus, these staff members are now housed in the newest office building on the premises, Building H.

Inaugurated in 2021, Building H is an important investment for the future of the United Nations family in Geneva and sets the standard for new ways of working. Designed as a sustainable, highly efficient and cost-effective office building, Building H offers a collaborative working environment that is often praised by users, including OHCHR staff just a month after having moved in. With both sustainability and accessibility standards high on the OHCHR agenda, the alignment of Building H with the Sustainable Development Goals and with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy also resonates with the newly arrived staff.

In addition, Building H gives OHCHR personnel easy access to the various conference and meetings rooms of the Palais des Nations, where significant intergovernmental processes take place, including those of the Human Rights Council. Such proximity facilitates exchanges and collaboration between staff, service providers, Member State delegations and civil society as they continue to work collectively for peace, rights and well-being for all.

Space optimization or how to improve the use of office space across the Palais des Nations

To support a modern and agile work culture where interactions and collaboration prevail, UN Geneva has implemented a new space optimization policy across the Palais des Nations campus. This also reflects the growing use of hybrid working arrangements in recent years.

In 2024, this new policy allowed the Palais des Nations to welcome new United Nations Secretariat entities, including staff from OHCHR. The optimization will enhance efficiencies while also fostering knowledge-sharing and cooperation across United Nations system entities in Geneva.

Beyond maximizing available space, this initiative supports a cost-efficient use of office resources, helping to reduce the overall footprint of the operations of the United Nations family in Geneva and to improve UN Geneva's global sustainability efforts.

“Suddenly you reconnect with colleagues as you cross paths when moving around the building. The meeting rooms are easy to book and well-equipped, and the office space layout largely facilitates collaboration.”

OHCHR Logistics Officer, Xavier Lemee, following his move into Building H in December.

Staff members meet informally on one of the terraces of Building H.
©UN Photo: Matija Potocnik

Preparing for the last phase of the renovation works

The renovation of Building E is the last phase of the Strategic Heritage Plan project. In 2024, preparatory works – also referred to as early action works – were launched ahead of the renovation scheduled to take place in 2025.

Building E was built in the early 1970s and is composed of two main parts: a conferencing centre with 11 meeting rooms, and a tower housing office spaces. The centerpiece of the building is a large, glazed façade overlooking the Alps and Lake Geneva. At the time of construction, the building’s double-glazed windows were the largest ever made in Europe. The renovation of the façade as part of the Strategic Heritage Plan project will preserve the existing heritage features and provide improved energy performance. Brise-soleils will also be installed, ensuring solar protection for staff, delegates and visitors.



The lakeside façade of Building E dates from the early 1970s and includes 24 large, double-glazed windows.
©UN Photo: Matija Potocnik

The preparatory works launched this year by the Strategic Heritage Project team included the removal of two existing double-glazed windows, which were replaced with a mock-up. This will allow construction experts and heritage authorities to assess the quality and mechanical behavior of the components, which is an essential step prior to the replacement of the entire façade. Fences, including some specifically designed to absorb noise, were also installed around the perimeter this year to facilitate the works, including the delivery and removal of materials, and to ensure the safety of construction workers, staff, delegates and visitors.



As part of the preparatory works of the Strategic Heritage Plan, two of the existing double-glazed windows are removed by a contractor.
©UN Photo: Strategic Heritage Plan



A mock-up of the renovated façade windows is installed. Building and heritage experts will review the mock-up before launching the production of the rest of the windows that will constitute the renovated façade.
©UN Photo: Strategic Heritage Plan

The green revolution: pioneering sustainability at the Palais des Nations

In 2024, a new environmental policy was developed at UN Geneva to guide the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability considerations into its work and operations. Approved by the Director-General of UN Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, the policy formalizes sustainability efforts and initiatives launched in previous years and provides a framework and overarching principles to further align UN Geneva’s practices with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Building upon the 2019 environmental policy for the United Nations Secretariat, the new policy takes the local context into account, setting principles and objectives at all levels and calling for systematic and continuous improvements. Its launch in October encouraged several teams at UN Geneva to integrate environmental sustainability into their daily work.

For example, in 2024, UN Geneva’s Security and Safety Service expanded its fleet of electric vehicles with three new Renault cargo-type electric cars. This decision was the latest step in a commitment to reduce overall costs, optimize the fleet size according to operational needs, and minimize the impact of the fleet on the environment, particularly its CO₂ emissions. Since 2018, the vehicle fleet has been reduced from thirteen to eight, with five of these vehicles now electric and one hybrid. Additionally, the team increasingly uses electric bikes, allowing security officers to move around the Palais des Nations campus in an environmentally friendly way. These efforts have contributed to a significant 46 per cent reduction in fuel consumption for the Service since 2018, while supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and enhancing the health and well-being of UN Geneva staff.

Efforts have also been made to preserve biodiversity on the Palais des Nations campus. In September, UN Geneva’s Facilities Management Section and the staff-led Gardening Club, in partnership with the Republic and Canton of Geneva, installed an insect hotel on the premises. The insect hotel is made of eco-friendly materials: the structure was built with local and sustainable wood, while branches, hay, pinecones, bricks and clay pots constitute “furniture”. These natural, discarded and reusable materials provide comfortable habitats for local insects, enhancing their conservation.

Reusing and recycling is also a priority at UN Geneva. In November, UN Geneva colleagues joined forces to collect second-hand stationery items. Staff moves across the campus throughout the year left many items behind that were still functional and in good condition. Through this initiative, a selection of office supplies was made available to all staff on campus, promoting the use of second-hand items, reducing overall waste and ensuring cost savings for the Organization.

Reflecting on the strides made in 2024, it is clear that the commitment of UN Geneva to environmental sustainability is not just a policy, but a practice embedded in daily operations. From reducing the carbon footprint with electric vehicles to enhancing biodiversity with eco-friendly initiatives, every effort contributes to a greener, healthier future. These achievements are a testament to the dedication of UN Geneva and its staff to remaining steadfast in the mission to align practices with the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that the Palais des Nations stands as a beacon of sustainability for years to come.



The insect hotel installed by members of the UN Geneva Gardening Club in Ariana Park.
©UN Photo



Staff from UN Geneva’s Security and Safety Service showcase their new electric vehicles and bikes in front of the Alley of Flags.
©UN Photo