

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL  
TO THE 48TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
"THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA"

INTRODUCTION:

1. Europe contributes greatly to UN global activities. It is also an area of the world with the most developed regional arrangements.
2. The past year has witnessed significant political developments in Europe, connected directly to the effects of the end of the cold-war. There has been a resurgence of nationalism which manifested itself: a) as an expression of the right to self-determination by the newly established states of the former Soviet Union and central Europe; b) as an expression of sentiments of xenophobia and racism, particularly towards foreigners, in a number of Western European Countries, with the consequent enactment of legislation aimed at reducing the flow of migrant workers and/or political refugees.
3. In the case of the Former Yugoslavia, the process of state building has not been peaceful and especially in the new republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina the continuing conflict is a matter of great concern for the international community, threatening as it does the security and stability of the whole region.
4. New forms of regionalism have also emerged. Most evident and successful among them is the CSCE. Because of its inter-continental character, the CSCE's regional components have acquired an even more specifically defined role, although sub-regional groupings have either strengthened their influence or have more recently emerged, such as the Twelve, the Nordic Group, the Baltic Council, the Black Sea Free Economic Zone, etc. In the territories of the former Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States continues to try to emerge as a valid interlocutor for both the European Community and NATO.
5. At the same time, there has been a weakening of the support for the process of European integration which reached its high point at Maastricht. Because of slow growth, economic difficulties resulting from budget deficits and/or currency fluctuations, two of the four European countries belonging to the G-7 had to devalue their currencies and leave sine die the EMS (Italy and the United Kingdom). The idea of a European Monetary Union has been pushed still further away, so too the effective abolition of restrictions to the free movement of goods and people among the Twelve.
6. There has been continuing trade friction, particularly between the United States, Europe and Japan, to the point that the Uruguay Round of the GATT negotiations has not yet been successfully completed.
7. In these conditions, UNOG, which inherits not only the location but also the diplomatic traditions of the League of Nations, as well as the very rich experience of cooperation within the UN system as a European based centre of UN activities, has played a double role: by catalyzing European efforts to deal with their own problems and by helping solve global issues.

UNOG:

8. The work of the United Nations Office at Geneva had a new impetus at the beginning of 1993 with the attribution to it of new responsibilities closely linked to the on-going process of reform which aims at decentralization, with a consequent delegation of authority, and the most effective and efficient distribution of tasks between central and local UN headquarters.
9. In order to succeed in meeting the post cold-war challenges in Europe and in developing a new international framework in which the UN can effectively operate, the UN Office at Geneva has had, in 1993, to address and resolve a twin problem of substance and structure. A priority action has been to improve management and the responsiveness of the Office to the requirements of the new conditions of international relations and the consequent new demands, particularly in UN operational activities.
10. UNOG has considerably enhanced its efforts aimed at strengthening the ability of the family of the United Nations to work together under one roof. It has begun a process aimed at developing effective relations

between the UN and institutions and organizations in order to enhance the timely flow of communication and information, as well as the exchange of experiences. It is also using more effectively the human and material resources of the Organization. It has considerably enhanced its relations with the Host Country.

11. The UN Office at Geneva, as a catalyst of both global and regional efforts, is making full use of its "comparative advantages" in humanitarian and human rights issues, economic and trade questions, disarmament and related security matters, to create an efficient network with UN specialized agencies and programmes and the European regional organizations and thus become the focal point of an integrated UN approach.

12. In general, the UN Office at Geneva is a unique international centre of diplomatic and legal know-how which goes back to the time of the League of Nations. The Office is the focal point in Europe for UN activities and other Offices in Europe (Vienna, Turin, The Hague, etc.) and for UN relations with Governments, inter-governmental bodies, as well as with some 600 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC. According to some estimates, more than 50 % of the practical, operational work of the UN is carried out by the various UN Offices and Agencies located in Geneva: work that affects people, countries, legislations, and practices. The UN Office at Geneva is the largest conference centre of the UN, with some 7,000 meetings organized each year increasingly attended by Heads of State or Government or Senior Ministers, and is now more than ever utilized for highly political questions dealing with the Former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., as well as for information, communication and logistical support to missions related to preventive diplomacy or fact-finding in the Republics of the former Soviet Union.

13. During 1993, UNOG has consistently expanded its role in four main directions: a) as a centre for conference diplomacy and as an international forum for consultations, cooperation and dialogue between nations in Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa and the Euro-Asian Continent. b) as the second largest centre of the United Nations for global activities of the Organization in the fields of human rights, disarmament and related security issues, and economic, development and trade issues as part of the integrated strategy for sustainable development. c) as a focal point for increased cooperation and dialogue with the agencies and other parts of the UN family that operate in Geneva and in Europe: particularly, ILO, WHO, FAO, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, the IAEA, as well as the NGO community and the ICRC. d) Finally, as a traditional focal point for European activities of the UN, UNOG has increasingly catalyzed regional cooperation with institutions such as the CSCE, the European Community, the Council of Europe, NATO, as well as with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and established effective communication links with them.

14. A great challenge for UNOG during the past year has been the need to do more with less. Its divisions of Administration and Conference Services had to manage growing demands on a reduced base of human and financial resources.

15. In addition to servicing traditional bodies related to the Economic Commission for Europe, the Conference on Disarmament, UNCTAD and the Centre for Human Rights, as well as high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council, an increasing part of resources has been devoted to servicing political and peace-keeping related activities: for instance, the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the UN Compensation Commission, the War Crime Commission (Security Council Res. 780/1993) and the Iraq-Kuwait Demarcation Commission. Additional efforts and resources have gone into new mandates resulting from the Rio Conference or into the preparation of major conferences, such as the World Conference on Human Rights.

16. In 1993, there have been approximately 300 million pages printed, 55 million words translated, 25 million documents distributed and 900,000 volumes made available to the public in the UNOG Library together with 13,000 periodicals dealing with legal, economic, social and political questions. In order to be able to effectively carry out the new mandates, the use of new technology has been necessary in a number of areas, for instance the Document Records, Information and Tracking System; the electronic composition of documents, optical disc system for the storage and remote retrieval of documents and automatic computerized sorting and packing of documents distributed around the world.

17. The Administration of UNOG has continued to provide financial services to a large network of organizations. The increased demands in the humanitarian field have resulted in more field staff in Offices such as the UNHCR. This growth has been evident in Geneva as well as in the more than 100 field offices of

UNHCR, all of which are supported administratively by UNOG. Thus, over the past year, the staff managed by UNOG grew to some 6500 which includes regular, field, branch office and short-term staff. Overall, the Administration of UNOG managed in 1993 some \$ 250 million from the regular budget and other sources of funds.

18. The UN Office at Geneva is actively supporting the on-going process of new regionalism, thus guaranteeing the open and interlocking character with respect to the UN of new sub-regional organizations. The Office is making a substantive contribution to the implementation of "Agenda for Peace", particularly from the humanitarian/human rights point of view. Furthermore, it is contributing to the overall UN efforts with respect to the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Organization in 1995, with the full support of the Swiss Authorities. The Office is increasingly enhancing its global action in humanitarian, human rights, economic, trade and disarmament issues. It is also revitalizing its cooperation with European institutions and is strengthening its horizontal cooperation with the family of the UN in Europe. It is also enhancing its cooperation with organizations from other regions such as the Organization of African Unity. Finally, it is improving and streamlining its management practices and making more efficient and effective use of the available resources.

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