



UNHCR
Headquarters
in Geneva.

UNHCR/R. BOILLAT

Three . questions*

After 23 years with UNHCR, Sylvie Genhart-Maillot, Senior Editorial Associate in the Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service at Geneva Headquarters, agreed to share some memories and advice...

WHY DID YOU JOIN UNHCR?

In the 1980s when I worked at the European Commission's Geneva delegation, I became very interested in humanitarian work. And when I was looking to return to work in 1993 after caring for my three children in their early years, I learned that UNHCR was looking for a secretary in the Section responsible for working with the European Commission within the Fundraising Service (today's Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization (DRRM) Service). This was my lucky chance and after applying and being interviewed, I was recruited and so began my career with UNHCR!

A MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT?

There was one in particular which had an impact on my professional life that I remember well.

In my first post, I was involved in helping to manage the European Commission's funding of food support for refugees. Following a review of job functions in the Service, I volunteered to undertake new responsibilities related to the operational aspects of EC food aid. This opened up a new professional dimension for me where I could contribute even more than the secretarial support I had been providing until then. It was a turning point in my career and made me feel that I was able to contribute something unique to the work of UNHCR. And today, in my final position as Senior Editorial Associate in the Appeals and Reports Section in DRRM, I have continued to develop my understanding and sense of engagement at the heart of the humanitarian world.

ADVICE FOR A YOUNG PERSON JOINING UNHCR TODAY?

Give all you can and devote yourself with the greatest enthusiasm to humanitarian work. But don't forget that you have a family and personal life, for it is only by keeping a balance between family and work that you will be able to enjoy a healthy and successful professional life.

* The *Three Questions* interviews put the spotlight on colleagues who have dedicated much of their working lives to UNHCR and the refugee cause.