

Economic and Social Council

Item 20: United Nations Research and Training Institutes

United Nations Institute for Training and Research Report of the Secretary-General

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21 April 2017

Distinguished Vice President of ECOSOC, Ms. Marie Chatardova,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am honored to introduce the Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, E/2017/48.

UNITAR's mission is to develop the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions, largely in developing countries, driven by the goals and values of the United Nations. UNITAR was established more than 50 years ago, with its flagship area of programming targeting diplomats and delegates in New York. Earlier in my career, I was once a beneficiary of UNITAR, and I am sure that many of you have also benefitted from the Institute's training services at one time or another.

While the Institute continues with its diplomatic training in New York and now also in Geneva and Vienna, the scope of UNITAR programming has expanded over the years to cover all pillars of the UN's work: peace and security, economic development, social progress and environmental sustainability.

UNITAR's present strategic framework covers six broad programming areas: (1) strengthening multilateralism, (2) promoting economic development and social inclusion, (3) advancing environmental sustainability, (4) promoting sustainable peace, (5) improving resilience and humanitarian assistance and (6) supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Presently, we are in the process of articulating our 2018-2021 strategic framework, which we intend to align closely with the 2030 Agenda's main pillars, including Peace, Prosperity (through economic development), People (through social inclusion) and Planet (and environmental protection). This new strategic framework will be built on a common vision defined by growth, modernization, innovation, quality assurance, visibility and openness/inclusiveness, and renewed efforts to reach the furthest behind first and, in particular, beneficiaries from countries in special situations, including the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and the Least-Developed Countries (LDCs).

Madam Vice President,

Over the course of the past biennium (2014-2015), UNITAR delivered training and knowledge sharing services to nearly 75,000 beneficiaries, with three-quarters of our training beneficiaries coming from developing countries (and 32 per cent from the LDCs). The female-male gender ratio stood at 35-65 (and 43-57 without the peacekeeping training which targets mainly the male dominated peacekeeping sector).

2016 was also equally successful, with UNITAR reaching out for the first time in its history to over 50,000 beneficiaries, and with 50 per cent of its developing country learning-related beneficiaries coming from countries in special situations (SIDS, LLDCs and LDCs). This increased level of outreach within existing annual expenditures of some \$24 million is an important indication of how the Institute has become much more efficient and effective over time.

Madam Vice President,

As I have indicated, UNITAR is placing greater emphasis on aligning its programming with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with recent and on-going initiatives focusing on developing country capacity to mainstream the SDGs and promote policy integration, as well as to develop statistical capacities to support improved data availability. Moreover, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, UNITAR co-organized a regional workshop on developing national evaluation capacities which, in addition to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, also contributed to efforts to follow up on General Assembly resolution 69/237 on building national evaluation capacities.

- In the area of strengthening multilateralism, the Institute continues to support the diplomatic communities in New York and Geneva with the primary objective of ‘levelling the playing field” between developed country and developing country delegations. With the gracious support from the Governments of Algeria and Sweden, UNITAR waived course fees for some 800 delegates.
- In addition to core diplomatic training, UNITAR is working to empower women in decision-making and has launched a women’s leadership programme aimed at addressing the gender imbalance that exists in delegations to multilateral conferences. During 2015 and 2016, the programme trained more than 400 delegates through 11 activities.
- In the area of promoting economic development and social inclusion, the Institute has undertaken a diverse range of programming, including initiatives aimed at promoting youth employability in Algeria and Nigeria. UNITAR’s network of affiliated training centres for local authorities and leadership has expanded to 16 centres, with new centres having opened in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Manila, the Philippines; Newcastle, Australia; and Zurich, Switzerland.
- In the field of international migration, UNITAR, with the support of the World Bank and other institutional partners, continues to lead a process by which municipal

and regional authorities share best practices on governing mobility issues within urban centres.

- In 2016, the Institute launched a new initiative to contribute to response to the urgent need for action to curb road traffic accidents, fatalities and injuries, which claim more than 1.2 million lives yearly. The initiative places priority on responding to needs of countries with the highest road traffic death rates, with a special focus on low-income countries, LDCs and SIDS.
- Under the strategic area of advancing environmental sustainability, UNITAR continues to contribute to building human and institutional capacities to overcome critical environmental challenges and promote low-carbon growth. UNITAR, together with its partners, continues activities of the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership, which has extended from 5 initial pilot countries to 16 based on clear and cross-government demand in each case. The project's free online introductory e-course on climate change continues to attract learners from all corners of the world, with more than 70,000 registrations recorded since the course was first launched in 2014. In environmental governance, UNITAR, UN Environment and UNDP have launched an inter-agency programme to strengthen capacities of rights-based, transparent and accountable environmental governance, with expected benefits across all SDGs. In the field of chemicals management, the Institute has continued its programming to accelerate the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the development of Minamata initial assessments, with support from the Government of Switzerland and the Global Environment Facility.
- In the area of promoting sustainable peace, UNITAR continues to strengthen its high-level engagement activities with Member States and the United Nations. In addition to planning and facilitating the seminar for special and personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General (now in its 13th year), the Institute continues its engagement with the out-going, sitting and in-coming representatives of African states on the Security Council, together with the Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the senior officials of the African Union Commission, to develop a common vision and policies on peace and security issues in Africa.

- Coinciding with the seventieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, UNITAR launched an annual training programme in Hiroshima on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in 2015, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
- Finally, under improving resilience and humanitarian assistance, UNITAR, through its Operational Programme for Satellite Imagery (UNOSAT), supports the international humanitarian community with improved access to information for decision-making and operational coordination in the field. In 2015, UNOSAT produced 333 maps derived from satellite imagery and reports covering natural disasters and humanitarian crises and, at the request of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provided assessments, including of damage following the earthquakes in Nepal and Ecuador; hurricane Winston in Fiji; and the landslide in Colombia.
- Parallel to its rapid mapping activities, the Institute has continued its programming to develop Geographical Information System (GIS)-related capacity of governments and organizations, including Chad and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Madam Vice President,

In addition to its six broad programmatic areas, the Institute continues to work to strengthen its managing for results, performance measurement and evaluation and quality assurance frameworks and practices. Beneficiary reaction to UNITAR learning-related events continues to be very positive, 92 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that events were useful overall. In 2016, participants completing learning events in 2015 were randomly sampled to assess the extent to which knowledge and/or skills were applied as a follow-up to training, with nearly 80 per cent of respondents confirming that they had applied knowledge and/or skills to their respective workplaces.

Madam Vice President,

The progress and achievements in programming and operations are generally reflected in the positive feedback received from compliance and oversight mechanisms.

UNITAR is 100 per cent voluntary funded. Despite the challenging economic environment, the Institute's income remains stable, with some \$24 million in cash received in 2016, and progress has been made on reversing the declining trend of non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund, thanks largely to the contributions from the Government of Algeria. The Institute also recognizes with much appreciation its other top donors, including the Governments of Afghanistan, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, Norway, Russia and Switzerland, in addition to UN Environment and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

In concluding, allow me to express the Institute's gratitude to Member States for their continuing support and echo the recommendation of the Secretary-General for Member States to welcome the new strategic direction that UNITAR is taking to make a meaningful, cost-effective and impactful contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; for UNITAR to continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and the outcomes of relevant international conferences, such as the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; and for Member States to encourage UNITAR to align with the ongoing reforms of the United Nations Development System, including in the finalization of its new strategic framework for 2018-2021, with a view to enhancing effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.