



unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Knowledge to lead

Newsletter Winter 2009

UNITAR Sends its Seasons Greetings and Gears Up for 2010

The year 2009 will leave no one indifferent. As the world was entering into a recession and a rather grim economic forecast, UNITAR had to pursue its objectives and work even harder to attain them.

UNITAR showed its responsiveness on global issues by providing the international humanitarian community with satellite imagery analysis from its operational services and applied research activities. This involvement was quickly recognized and picked up by the international media which strongly increased the visibility of the Institute and UNOSAT more specifically. The Institute has also had the honor to chair the Global Migration Group (GMG) in the second semester and has recently handed over its responsibility to UNDP for the 1st half of 2010. Climate change is now being considered as a major challenge for humanity. Therefore, participating to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen was a priority for the Institute and a great opportunity to show its presence as well as raising awareness on activities for a positive impact on the environment.

In October 2009, about 1700 participants assisted to a high-level lecture by Mikhail Gorbachev and UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon on resetting the nuclear disarmament agenda. The third edition of the Geneva Lecture Series (GLS), organized in conjunction with the UN Office in Geneva, proved to be a great success and received media coverage world-wide.

By year end, UNITAR signed an agreement to open a new representation office in Brazil thus strengthening the Institute's presence in Latin America to better respond to beneficiaries' needs in the region. This represents a milestone in the expansion of the institute which will become effective in 2010.

UNITAR's core activities have been improved and even better delivered to our beneficiaries around the world. The emphasis put on technology-based learning is bearing fruit and will further be enhanced in 2010, contributing to UNITAR's climate neutral policy. This reflects one of the new strategic directions highlighted in the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan that will serve as the Institute's blueprint for the next 3 years. On the communication front, UNITAR made an appearance on social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and even created its own channel on YouTube.

In This Issue

In Focus	1
Trends & Activities	2
From Outposted Offices	3
Knowledge to Lead	4
Partnerships & Collaborations	5

When reflecting on some of the accomplishments mentioned above and the many more activities conducted by UNITAR in the course of the past year, one can't prevent from thinking that the Institute had a quite fulfilling year. All these achievements were made possible by the hard work and passion that animates UNITAR's staff and collaborators. With the momentum garnered in 2009, rest assured that UNITAR is more than ready to respond to the needs of its beneficiaries and take on the many challenges that await us all in 2010.

In Focus

Moving towards New Strategic Directions in 2010 – 2012

Geneva, 12 – 13 November 2009: The UNITAR's Board of Trustees endorsed the Institute's Strategic Plan for 2010 – 2012, providing an ambitious and visionary move towards more innovative training service delivery and improved resource efficiency by strengthening results-based management and introducing a new client-focused business model.



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The foreseen innovations aim at strengthening UNITAR's capacity in meeting cutting-edge thematic demands while widening the number of languages in which courses are offered. The deployment of advanced technologies such as mobile learning platforms and the introduction of a cost-recovery scheme to improve long-term financial stability are also envisaged.

Promoting South-south Cooperation from Brazil

Brasilia, 17 November 2009: A technical cooperation agreement was signed with the Brazilian Ministry of Planning, the Brazilian School of Public Administration (ENAP), and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) to develop the capacity of Brazilian civil servants in the area of infrastructure development and to share expertise on knowledge management.



In line with its partnerships strategy and following recommendations of the Board of Trustees, UNITAR has concluded an agreement with the Government of Brazil in view of establishing a UNITAR Representation Office early 2010. In addition to a regional mandate, the Office will contribute to develop executive training and innovative learning products to support Brazil's government infrastructure projects and to promote South-South cooperation and transfer of know-how between Brazil and countries in Latin America as well as with Portuguese-speaking countries.

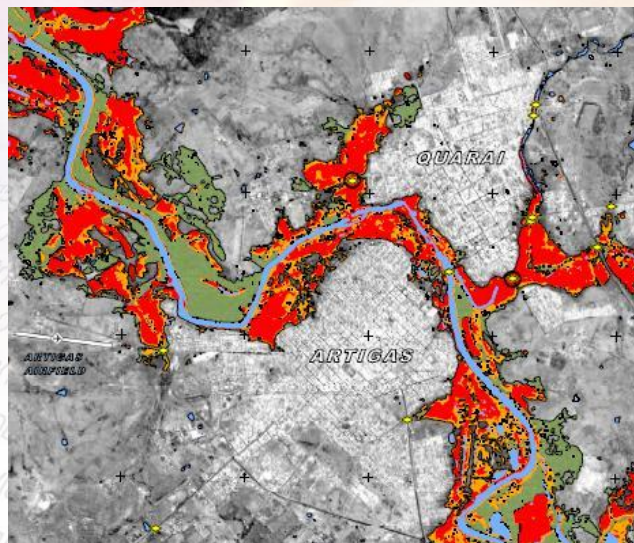
First year activities are designed jointly by UNITAR and ENAP in order to match the needs of Brazilian civil servants and of those of beneficiary partner countries. Both face-to-face and e-learning courses will deal with intra and intergovernmental coordination, monitoring and evaluation of infrastructure projects, budget management, private and public partnerships development, bidding processes and contracts.

Trends & Activities

UNOSAT Assists UNDP Following Floods in Uruguay

Geneva, 2nd half of November 2009: More than 4,000 people have been affected by heavy rains and consequent floods in Uruguay. On request by UNDP, UNOSAT provided satellite imagery maps and analysis

to the UN Country Team and national stakeholders. The most affected area was in the province of Artigas on the border with Brazil.



As the official "UN User Intermediary", UNOSAT triggered the International Charter Space and Major Disasters and activated its Humanitarian Rapid Mapping capacity.

Launch of the "Police Platform for Urban Development" in Barcelona

Barcelona, 6 November 2009: UNITAR participated in the launch of the Police Platform for Urban Development in Barcelona, Spain, bringing together 93 participants representing 23 countries.

Improving safety in cities calls for greater interaction between the police and local authorities, urban planners, civil society organizations and communities. The Police Platform for Urban Development facilitates discussion and exchange of information among stakeholders, and develops guidance on issues of safety and security in human settlements.

The platform is run under the leadership of the UN-HABITAT Safer Cities Programme as a partnership project including UNITAR, CIFAL Barcelona, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Swedish National Police, and the Ministry of the Interior, Institutional Relations and Participation of Catalonia.

Strengthening Participatory Environmental Governance through Multi-Stakeholder Process

As a contribution to enhance implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, UNITAR, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), is providing capacity development support to countries in Central America.

With funding from the Government of Spain, the objectives are to catalyze a multi-stakeholder process, to prepare a National Profile, to assess existing capacities at national and local levels, and to identify further targeted capacity development actions to strengthen participatory environmental governance.

Principle 10 was adopted at the Rio Summit in 1992 and seeks to strengthen stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making through three main pillars: access to information, public participation and access to justice.

Managua, 18 November of 2009: More than 50 participants from various government sectors and stakeholder groups participated in a National Planning Workshop to kick-off a 1-year UNITAR supported project entitled "Preparing a National Profile and Action Plan on the Implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration".

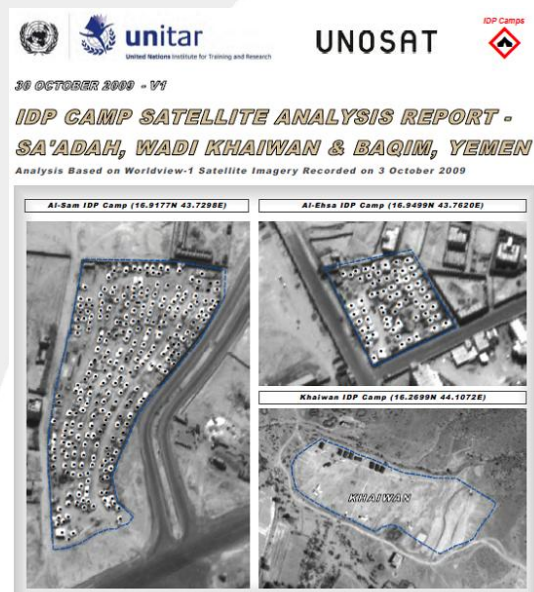
Nicaragua has taken considerable steps in modernizing its environmental legislation, including new provisions to secure access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. The workshop revealed however opportunities to enhance the effective implementation of Principle 10, and highlighted challenges such as high levels of illiteracy, making information available in an understandable manner and proper dissemination of information to the public.

"The Government of Nicaragua is committed in taking the steps to implement Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration with the goal to protect the environmental rights and interests of civil society. The [Principle 10] project encourages collaboration between the government and nongovernmental parties, including the private sector, public interest groups, universities and indigenous groups".

Mrs. Elisa Marengo Castellon, Director of the Division of Politics and Strategy of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA)

Monitoring Internally Displaced People (IDP) Camps in Yemen

Geneva, November 2009: As the international community increased efforts to bring relief to people displaced by conflict in Yemen, UNOSAT released a new IDP analysis report on the IDP camps in Sa'adah, Yemen, based on very high resolution satellite imagery acquired in October 2009.



Updated analysis is being provided free of charge to the International Community as new satellite imagery is acquired. The IDP shelter count was obtained from automated building extraction methods.

From Outposted Offices

Successful Completion of the UNITAR Hiroshima Fellowship Programme for Afghanistan

Hiroshima, December 2009: the UNITAR Hiroshima Fellowship Programme for Afghanistan, a seven-month-long capacity building initiative undertaken in partnership with the Hiroshima Prefectural Government, the Singapore International Foundation and Microsoft Corporation, was recently concluded with the graduation of 32 Fellows and Coaches.



This initiative aims at supporting the reconstruction process of Afghanistan by developing leadership and expertise within a core group of Afghan public officials. The sixth annual Cycle began last April and comprised three weeklong sessions in Afghanistan, Singapore and Japan and five web-seminars linking participants in Kabul with mentors and experts in Hiroshima, Phoenix, Calgary, Singapore and Seattle.

With the completion of the sixth Cycle, UNITAR has graduated 185 Fellows since the inception of the programme.

Increasing Participatory Budgeting and Revenue Generation (PBRG)

Fundamental deficits to sustainable development are observed as more resources are needed to meet the huge demand for basic social services in the Niger Delta Region. The level of institutional capacity to generate adequate funds to execute projects, and the limited inclusive citizenry/stakeholder participation in priority setting and decision making for the communities represent core challenges.

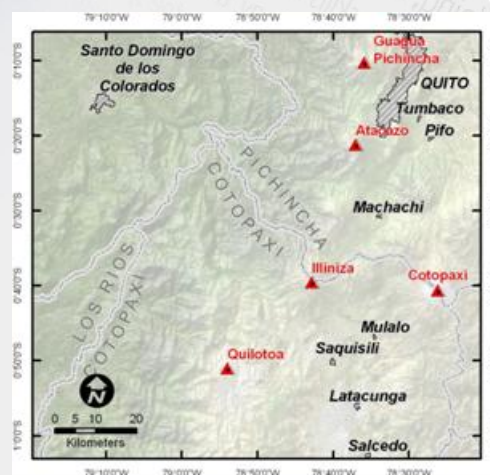
Yenagoa, November 2009: 35 senior officials from 17 local government areas participated in a three-day workshop in view of strengthening their capacities to implement sustainable and socioeconomic programmes that will bring about economic independence into their communities through PBGR. Organized jointly with the Abia State Government, the interactive workshop enabled participants to understand the concept of PBRG, its risks and measures for mitigating them, and its application in the framework of Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (LEEDS).

Each participant drew up an action plan for new revenue generation agenda at their respective local government area; and guidelines for inclusive collaboration with citizens in decision making for increased revenue generation were established. UNITAR is requested to organize further similar activities for Chief Executives of the Local Government Authorities and Legislators at the State Assembly to update them and facilitate the implementation of the new concept of PBRG in Abia State.

Knowledge to lead

UNOSAT announces results of research on Volcanic Risk

7th Swiss Geosciences Meeting, Neuchatel 2009: UNOSAT trainee and volcano expert Sebastien Biass presented the results of his latest research and applications to help decision makers dealing with volcanic ash fallouts during catastrophic events in densely populated areas.



Conducted in cooperation with the University of Geneva, the research project has evidenced that volcanic ashes play an important role during volcanic disasters, especially when related to explosive activity. Because of a constant increase of population density around volcanoes, better knowledge of hazards, vulnerability and risks, and better geospatial information, are necessary to governments and planners to produce efficient emergency planning and effective response.

Based on a numerical model for producing probabilistic hazard assessment, the methodology incorporates this hazard assessment into a GIS method using fuzzy modeling to draw comprehensive and tangible exposure-based risk maps. The methodology has been applied to the Cotopaxi volcano (Ecuador), a case study selected for developing and testing the method.

UNITAR and OECD Launch Unprecedented Activities on Nanotechnology and Manufactured Nanomaterials for Developing and Transition Countries

Under the auspices of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals

(which UNITAR presently chairs), and with initial financial support from Switzerland, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, OECD and UNITAR are holding Awareness-Raising Workshops on Nanotechnology / Manufactured Nanomaterials for Developing and Transition Countries.



Organized in conjunction with UN regional meetings on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) during 2009-2010 following a request for action regarding nanotechnologies and

nanomaterials, the workshops inform on potential applications and risks from nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials as well as look for opportunities for awareness raising activities to be undertaken in those countries.

The first workshops were held respectively held in Beijing, China, on 27 November 2009, for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and in Lodz, Poland, on 11 December 2009, for Central and Eastern European countries. Workshops for the Africa and Latin America regions and the Arab Countries sub-region will follow in 2010 with financial support from Switzerland.

Nanotechnology, known as "the science of the small", and its products – "manufactured nanomaterials" – have the possibility to change life as we know it. With this technology, a computer can be built to fit on the head of a pin; laptop batteries can have much longer lives between chargings; and materials such as clothing can be made miraculously stain-proof. However, these tiny particles measured on the scale of one billionth of a meter or 1/80,000 the width of a human hair, especially if they are released into the workplace or the environment, pose risks that the scientific community and policy makers are just beginning to study.

Partnerships and collaborations

Setting-up a new CIFAL in Jeju, Republic of Korea

Jeju, 26 November 2009: The broad lines of the Partnership Agreement were discussed and agreed upon during the recent visit of UNITAR in Jeju, representing a major stage in the negotiation process between UNITAR, the [Jeju Self Governing Province](#) and [International Peace Foundation \(IPF\)](#) for the establishment of the CIFAL Jeju.

It is envisaged that CIFAL Jeju becomes the IPF's training arm providing face to face training to local authorities from the sub-region on themes related to human security and environment. It will serve as an information hub, and a platform for promoting city-to-city cooperation and more particularly for helping countries from the Asia Pacific region to learn and gain from the Republic of Korea's experience in these areas. Once approved by the IPF Board, it is expected that the Partnership Agreement will be signed in March 2010 and the center will be launched in summer 2010.

Prior to the visit in Jeju, meetings were held in Seoul with the UN Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to provide the Ministry with the necessary information regarding CIFAL Jeju in order to ensure the support of the Republic of Korea.



The visit was undertaken in the context of the strengthened role of the Republic of Korea in the field of Development Aid, as a new official member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The DAC is an international forum that brings together donor governments and multilateral organizations to discuss and set standards for effective aid to developing countries.

Supporting Most Vulnerable Developing Countries Facing Climate Change Challenges

UNITAR and Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH), UK have secured a multi-million project for the implementation of the EU Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) to help the most vulnerable developing countries increase their capacity to adapt to the effects of climate change, in support of the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs). The implementation of the GCCA support facility will therefore result in working at the core of most immediate and contemporary issues.

For the European Commission, this initiative “deepens [its] dialogue and steps up cooperation with the developing countries that are most vulnerable to climate change”. Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are located in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands. According to forecasting models, they will be the hardest hit by the adverse effects of climate change, and are the ones having the least capacity to react and adapt to these climate impacts.

Focusing on the five areas that form the climate change international agenda, the project aims to provide a platform for cooperation to *inter alia* tackle the combined challenge of the fight against poverty and climate change: development of national adaptation plans for vulnerable countries other than LDCs, and the effective implementation of existing national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs); reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD); increase overall participation in the clean development mechanism (CDM) process through capacity-building and technical support focusing on the development of cost-effective projects that can be implemented in LDCs and SIDS; promotion of natural disaster risk reduction (DRR) by improving climate forecasting and information systems, as well as the

translation of the collected data into effective preparedness measures; and integration of climate change into poverty reduction strategies and programmes.

A new partnership to boost CIFAL Curitiba

Curitiba, 19 November 2009: UNITAR’s Executive Director, Carlos Lopes, and the president of the Federation of Industries of state of Paraná (FIEP), Rodrigo da Rocha Loures, signed a partnership agreement to host CIFAL Curitiba, one among the ten affiliated centers of UNITAR, in view of boosting its activities and outreach of CIFAL Curitiba.

CIFAL Curitiba’s capacity development objectives are to provide learning and knowledge sharing opportunities to local actors from Latin America and the Caribbean in the fields of local economic development and sustainable urbanization and environment.

Carlos Lopes said “FIEP’s line of projects and work in the field of sustainable development are perfectly aligned with UNITAR’s capacity development philosophy”. The centre will also develop integrated training activities on public management benefiting local and regional authorities, international organizations, private sector and civil society as a whole, and stakeholders directly involved in local development actions and initiatives.



“FIEP’s engagement with another UN programme is the result of the work it has been developing favoring sustainable economic development in Paraná. The Federation is leading projects such as *We Can Paraná* and the *Sustainability Indicators Observatory (ORBIS)*”. “We will become a hub for the development, promotion and dissemination of knowledge in local development. Our main challenge is to contribute to the improvement of public management, focusing on peoples well being”, affirmed Rocha Loures.

Developing employability of host communities in the Niger Delta Region

The UNITAR Project Office in Port-Harcourt, Nigeria, is committed to bringing the huge institutional capacity development programmes and initiatives of the Institute to the easily accessible reach of relevant public and private sector operators in the Niger Delta Region. Through a major collaborative agreement with Total E&P Nigeria Ltd, UNITAR is focusing on how best to assess development needs of host communities, deliver training to capture and retain knowledge, and build upon acquired knowledge for community development and corporate social responsibility.

Renewed for a period of 3 years, the partnership is looking at developing employability of host communities, building technical capacities and skills of people to find jobs in the oil and gas sector (OML 58 Upgrade project). Required skills include millwright, instrumentation electro/tubing, cable tray, drilling, quality maintenance and safety supervisors and specialized industry based welding skills.

In collaboration with Total E&P and Norwegian specialized institutions, UNITAR has designed oil and gas industry specific trainings for 40 selected trainees from host communities in Egi/ Rivers State of Nigeria. First trainings took place in facilities in Norway and Namibia. Trainees in other areas of specialization are expected to follow in first quarter of 2010.

Strengthening partnership with Spot Image



Spot Image S.A. and UNITAR have a history of working together to enable mapping activities and applications based on earth observation data. An agreement was signed recently which strengthens the partnership between UNOSAT and Spot Image by providing the United Nations with favorable rates on satellite imagery routinely used at UNOSAT to produce analyses and crisis management maps.

As part of the partnership that gave origin to the UNOSAT Project in 2000, Spot Image makes earth observation images available for worthy causes such as responding to natural and man-made disasters, supporting humanitarian missions, the surveillance of the environment, international security and peace keeping, education and research. In all these domains, UNITAR committed to working to provide practical assistance to local authorities, UN managers and personnel in the field and at headquarters. UNOSAT and Spot Image share high interest in improving the availability of integrated and cost-effective packages involving remote sensing and GIS technology and service providers to the benefit of the United Nations system and Member States, especially developing countries and countries in transition.

Spot Image has a global presence providing global products, services and solutions derived from the SPOT constellation and multiple sources of satellite data ([ENVISAT](#), [FORMOSAT](#), [KOMPSAT](#)).

Joining forces with the City University of Hong Kong

Hong-Kong, 25 November 2009: UNITAR and the City University of Hong Kong sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in view of widening outreach in the Asia Pacific Region.

"As the first university in Hong Kong to enter into an agreement with UNITAR, CityU is honoured to be part of a partnership that promotes educational and research collaboration while simultaneously underscoring CityU's status as a leading educational institution."
Professor Chan Chi-hou, Acting Provost of City University of Hong Kong.

The purpose of this MoU, which is part of the overall UNITAR strategy to engage with renowned academic institutions around the world, is to provide a framework where UNITAR and the City University of Hong Kong can exchange ideas and share knowledge in order to maximize the respective impact through working in partnership.

In the recent past UNITAR has had the pleasure of working together with experts from the School of Law of the City University of Hong Kong and their contributions were extremely well appreciated. Based on this extremely positive experience and on the expertise of both institutions in the area of law education, the domain of international law was identified as a first concrete area for cooperation.



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معهد الأمم المتحدة للتدريب والبحث
联合国训练研究所

Palais des Nations
1211 - Geneva 10
Switzerland
T +41-22-917-8455
F +41-22-917-8047
www.unitar.org