

Moving towards a Climate Neutral UN: A strong political will



Climate Neutral Policy and Strategy: where there's a will there is a way

Within a few months in autumn 2008, UNITAR drafted its 2009–2010 climate-neutral policy and strategy, completed a first inventory of GHG emissions, set measurable emissions-reduction targets, and promulgated a number of measures to reduce its climate impact . What made such rapid process possible?

UNITAR's Executive Management simply took the decision by the UN Chief Executives' Board on Coordination (CEB) literally and made it a strategic priority for the Institute to become climate neutral. A Climate Neutral Task Force headed by the Associate Director of Environment was set up to ensure swift implementation. The Climate Neutral Policy was promulgated through an administrative circular, making it binding across the Institute.

An important aspect of the Policy is that it does not compromise the ability of the Institute to meet increasing demand for its training services. This is achieved by setting a target of reducing GHG emissions per person trained and unit of training delivered rather than absolute emissions-reduction benchmarks.

Extract from the UNEP publication titled: Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN: The UN system's footprint and efforts to reduce it.

Setting guidance for reducing carbon emissions

In December 2008, UNITAR promulgated its first climate neutral policy and strategy. Carlos Lopes, Executive Director of the Institute, emphasized that "enhancing the use of technology-supported learning, such as e-learning and video-conferencing, is an important dimension of our strategy to become carbon neutral and can be an effective complement to traditional learning approaches, such as face-to-face training".

UNITAR's commitment to reducing the carbon emissions per unit of training delivered by 50 per cent by 2012 was cited as an example of climate-friendly action within the UN system in a report entitled Moving towards a climate neutral UN: the UN system's footprint and efforts to reduce it.