

Sharing knowledge and stimulating dialogue on key issues



“I believe that the way UNITAR encourages the sharing of best practices between stakeholders in roundtable events is an excellent way of operating because people often do not have the opportunity for such exchanges of information”.

Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and UNITAR board member

UNITAR is entrusted with a key set of responsibilities within the UN. These include providing platforms for dialogue on key issues, but also serving as a facilitator of high-level discussions, and providing outreach on contemporary challenges facing society.

Public outreach on contemporary challenges facing society

To catalyze discussion and debate between the UN and the public at large on contemporary global challenges, UNITAR has worked with the United Nations Office at Geneva to launch the Geneva Lecture Series, an innovative forum that engages internationally recognized intellectuals, civil society activists and leaders from political and business spheres.

Speakers have included UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who spoke on the relevance of development goals; two Nobel Prize laureates, Dr. Shirin Ebadi and Dr. Wole Soyinka, who

spoke on the universality of human rights; and Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union, who argued the case for resetting the nuclear disarmament agenda.

The Geneva Lecture Series has already attracted over 4,000 participants, not counting the much broader outreach made possible through live web broadcasting.

Creating innovative knowledge through round-table discussions

UNITAR has been organizing high-level round table discussions on innovative topics and key issues since 2007. The events are open to a select public audience and provide a platform for knowledge-sharing with a panel of renowned experts and members of UNITAR's Board of Trustees.



“I believe that in today’s world, only multilateral approaches can be effective. That is why I have always been a determined supporter of the United Nations. I enjoyed participating in the UNITAR-UNOG 2009 Geneva Lecture focusing on nuclear disarmament”.

Mikhail Gorbachev, Former President of Russia,
President of Green Cross International



A facilitator of high-level discussions

Along with its training and capacity development programming, UNITAR has continued to act as facilitator for high-level strategic discussions.

The Institute is tasked with the organization of the annual seminar for Current Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General (now also organized in association with the United Nations

System Staff College) and the yearly high-level retreat for Security Council members.

UNITAR has also broadened its convener role to include facilitating the organization of the annual Heads of Mission conferences of the Department of Political Affairs, and the Department of Field Support's Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Since 2007, the Institute has been organizing the Secretary-General's annual retreat of the UN's senior-most management, together with the Staff College and the Department of Management of the Secretariat.

Incubating system-wide initiatives & building momentum

The purpose of this initiative is to provide a one-stop platform for accessing and sharing the wealth of knowledge and information gathered by the UN with its Member States.

Key achievements

- n More than 22 UN organizations partner in UNCC:Learn;
- n Endorsed by Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB);
- n UNITAR called to host UNCC:Learn Secretariat;
- n Launch of the partnership at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Summit.

“UNCC:Learn is an opportunity for UN agencies to cooperate and complement each others’ training efforts on climate change, and to Deliver as One”.

Veerle Vandeweerd, Director of Environment and Energy, UNDP

Activities

UNCC:Learn includes three closely-linked activity areas including: knowledge management; development of a “One UN” Training Package on Climate Change; and support for country-based pilot projects on strengthening human resources, learning and skill development on climate change.

The overall goal of working together as “One UN” is to facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience, ensuring a high quality of learning materials, and scaling up climate change training delivery by UN agencies in response to country demands under a future international climate change regime.

UNCC:Learn is being developed in a methodical, step-by-step manner, taking account of feedback, lessons-learned, and available resources.

