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United Nations research and training institutes

## United Nations Institute for Training and Research

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) develops the capacities of individuals, institutions and organizations in countries and among other United Nations stakeholders through the provision of high-quality learning solutions and research-derived knowledge products and services to enhance decision-making and support country-level action in overcoming global, national and local challenges. The Institute's financial situation continues to be one of stability and growth. Total income for the biennium 2022–2023 was \$83.7 million, representing an 11 per cent increase over the 2020–2021 figure of \$75.4 million.

Centred on training and applied research, the UNITAR programme of work continues to be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other outcomes of major conferences. The results achieved to date under the Institute's strategic framework for 2022–2025 are encouraging, notably the increased outreach to beneficiaries from developing countries and greater alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. In the period from 2022 to 2024, the Institute provided learning, training and related knowledge-sharing services to nearly 1.5 million individuals. The number of learning-related beneficiaries was also the highest ever, reaching 1,060,168 participants, or some 71 per cent of beneficiaries.

In accordance with the 2030 Agenda and its principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, in the period from 2022 to 2024 UNITAR continued to focus attention on building the capacities of developing countries (77 per cent of learning beneficiaries) and specifically of 93 countries in special situations (17 per cent of learning beneficiaries); of note, 20 per cent of UNITAR learners were from Africa, which has the largest number of countries in special situations and complex settings. Empowering women and girls through capacity enhancement is also identified as a priority in the strategic framework.



Under the guidance of a new leadership team, UNITAR is defining its strategic objectives for the period from 2026 to 2029 period through a collaborative approach that will build on the Institute's past achievements and seize opportunities to meet future challenges in the fields of training, research and capacity development in furtherance of the 2030 Agenda.

It is recommended that UNITAR continue to expand its programming in alignment with the 2030 Agenda, deepen its beneficiary outreach and explore ways to strengthen engagement at the country level through enhanced linkages with the United Nations system with a view to ensuring that its programming has greater impact. It is also recommended that Member States lend their full support, including through unearmarked funds, in order to enable the Institute to invest in business development and scale up its efforts to meet national capacity-building, learning and other needs. In addition, UNITAR should intensify engagement with other stakeholders, including the business and private sectors, foundations and relevant United Nations entities, so as to strengthen and expand support to countries, particularly those in special situations.

## I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a dedicated training and research arm of the United Nations, supporting Governments, the United Nations and other partners in the achievement of broader social, economic and peace outcomes.
2. Under the Institute's strategic framework for 2022–2025, the UNITAR programme of work continues to be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other outcomes of major conferences, including those of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Institute's strategic direction is also inspired by the calls of the Secretary-General in his reports entitled "Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all" (A/72/124-E/2018/3) and "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982), as well as the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1).
3. In 2023, UNITAR celebrated its sixtieth anniversary with a series of high-impact initiatives that showcased six decades of commitment to capacity development and enhanced brand visibility and outreach. Commemorative events held in Bonn, Germany; Geneva; Hiroshima, Japan; and New York expanded the Institute's presence both online and offline.
4. Section II of the present report provides an overview of UNITAR workstreams under the peace, people, planet, prosperity and cross-cutting programme pillars of the strategic framework. Section III offers a review of the collaborative process under way to prepare the strategic framework for the period 2026–2029. Section IV addresses the financial situation of the Institute, which continues to be characterized by increasing stability and growth. Lastly, section V sets out recommendations.
5. The Institute has been under new leadership since February 2025, when a new Executive Director took office. The Institute is in the process of developing a strategic framework for the period 2026–2029.

## II. Implementing the strategic framework

6. In its resolution 2023/7, the Economic and Social Council encouraged UNITAR to continue to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and the outcomes of relevant international conferences, and to continue to align and harmonize its activities with the 2030 Agenda.
7. In implementing its strategic framework for 2022–2025, UNITAR reached a milestone of 1.5 million beneficiaries from virtually all Member States, with 1,060,168 individuals (or 71 per cent) benefiting from activities with specific learning outcomes, such as e-learning courses, skills development workshops and joint Masters degree and executive training programmes. In addition to such learning-related activities, UNITAR organized knowledge-sharing events including conferences, panel discussions and side-events. It also delivered knowledge products and services, the most noteworthy being the emergency mapping and image analysis undertaken by the United Nations Satellite Centre and the research and publications produced by the Sustainable Cycles Programme on e-waste.
8. Approximately three quarters of the Institute's learners come from developing countries. In furtherance of the principle set out in the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind, UNITAR places an emphasis on developing knowledge, skills and other

capacities of stakeholders from 93 countries in special situations or complex settings, including fragile States and those emerging from conflict, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

9. Gender considerations continue to feature prominently in the strategic framework, with the objective of achieving gender parity among beneficiaries in line with the system-wide strategy on gender parity. UNITAR has improved its outreach to female beneficiaries since 2021, with a female to male ratio of 47 to 48 in 2024 (5 per cent of beneficiaries were recorded as non-binary, or their gender was not disclosed or not recorded). UNITAR continues to target vulnerable groups, with 93 per cent and the result areas of the revised programme budget for 2024–2025 aligned with the objective of supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women, and 89 per cent aligned with the principle of leaving no one behind.

## **A. Peace**

10. The Institute has expanded its capacity-building services, offering innovative training to promote peace, foster just, inclusive societies and enhance leadership and decision-making in relation to sustainability.

11. In collaboration with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, UNITAR continued to facilitate the Seminar for Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General, which offers a unique space to engage with the Secretary-General on his vision and analysis of trends, challenges and opportunities, as well as strategies to address them.

12. Given the critical importance of conflict prevention and the primacy of political solutions, UNITAR continued to organize its annual Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy for senior- and mid-level professional staff from regional and subregional organizations and diplomats from foreign ministries, as well as from substantive departments of the United Nations Headquarters, peace missions and United Nations system entities. UNITAR also organized a regional programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic to enhance the peacemaking role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and of Asia-Pacific States. The two programmes trained 74 stakeholders in conflict analysis, prevention and resolution.

13. The Institute extended assistance to States Members of the United Nations and States members of the African Union in developing effective national and regional peacekeeping systems. That support was focused on developing comprehensive cooperation frameworks to enhance national strategies, align with relevant policies, refine operational concepts and improve command and control systems. UNITAR endeavoured to reinforce institutional capacity for sustainable peacekeeping by strengthening management, resourcing and implementation plans.

14. The Institute continued its efforts to create self-sustained capabilities for United Nations peace operations. Bearing in mind that improving performance in peace operations is a collective effort between troop- and police-contributing countries, United Nations Headquarters, field missions and other relevant stakeholders, UNITAR focused on training and mentoring, institutional advisory services, knowledge-sharing and innovation for uniformed personnel.

15. The Institute delivered predeployment training to 7,833 personnel (20 per cent women) from 23 troop- and police-contributing countries prior to their deployment to major United Nations peace operations. Notable in this area was the specialized training provided to medical and paramedical personnel, as well as the reinforcement of training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and on conduct and

discipline. UNITAR also placed a strong emphasis on building national capacities and fostering local ownership through a comprehensive training-of-trainers approach, equipping instructors with the necessary skills to deliver high-quality predeployment and specialized training independently within their respective institutions.

16. The Institute strengthened its commitment to gender mainstreaming in peace operations, supporting the women and peace and security agenda and the uniformed gender parity strategy 2018–2028. Efforts were focused on increasing the recruitment, training and deployment of uniformed women, in particular in leadership and advisory roles. UNITAR expanded training for Military Gender Advisers and Protection Focal Persons, as part of efforts to ensure the integration of gender perspectives into operational planning. It also reinforced partnerships with troop- and police-contributing countries to institutionalize gender-responsive policies. Data-driven approaches were used to track progress and refine strategies in order to foster long-term gender parity and inclusive leadership in peace operations.

17. In the area of women's empowerment, UNITAR worked with the African Union to support the women and peace and security agenda by strengthening the commitment of States members of the African Union and enhancing gender-responsive conflict analysis. UNITAR co-hosted the fourth and fifth high-level annual forums on women and peace and security, in Addis Ababa, which are aimed at fostering collaboration among policymakers and experts to advance efforts to further the women and peace and security agenda in Africa.

18. The Institute expanded its Women's Leadership for Peace programme to address the underrepresentation of women in peace processes. In support of the senior women talent pipeline initiative, UNITAR trained early- and mid-career women from over 50 countries, providing them with leadership tools, mentorship and global networking opportunities. It also offered tailored support for female Ukrainian civil servants in conflict-affected settings to enhance their ability to navigate peace and security mechanisms.

19. The Institute's youth and peace and security initiatives promote inclusive learning and the participation of young people in peace and development. In partnership with the Social Cohesion Consortium, UNITAR supported youth-led peacebuilding in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and also strengthened the capacities of officials and youth professionals in relation to developing national action plans to implement the youth and peace and security agenda, bridging policy and practice. Through the Premier League Changemakers initiative, girls and young women received leadership training and mentorship aimed at fostering confidence in leading change at the community level. These efforts empower young leaders to engage in peace, security and sustainable development.

20. The Institute worked with the International Organization for Migration and the Department of Peace Operations to support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme of Cameroon, in the context of which the Institute launched capacity-building on reducing community violence for members of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee. In partnership with the Department of Peace Operations and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, UNITAR improved weapons and ammunition management, enhancing safe handling and disposal skills. It also organized a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration webinar for United Nations Volunteers across 32 agencies in 54 countries, expanding global knowledge and capabilities in this area.

21. In the area of arms control, UNITAR partnered with the Office for Disarmament Affairs in 2024 with respect to the Fellowship Training Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons Control. The programme enhances the technical expertise of

mid-career practitioners and officials with a view to strengthening national capacities for the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, thereby supporting efforts to prevent and combat the illicit arms trade.

22. The Institute leads the Global Platform for Action on Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings, which is aimed at enhancing access to energy for displaced and host communities. The Platform improves quality, efficiency and scalability in energy programming while reducing costs and emissions. Its humanitarian energy exchange network fosters inter-agency collaboration for holistic energy solutions. UNITAR, NORCAP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) co-lead the decarbonizing humanitarian energy multi-partner trust fund in support of sustainable energy initiatives.

23. In the area of justice and the rule of law, UNITAR partnered with the national judicial training institute in Mali to deliver training courses to over 1,600 stakeholders on justice accessibility, democratic principles and respect for the rule of law. It also supported the translation and distribution of 16,000 legal texts in local languages.

24. The Institute partnered with the International Academy for the Fight Against Terrorism in Côte d'Ivoire to provide training on support for victims of terrorism, crisis management, civilian protection and the prevention of radicalization. UNITAR also continued to support peacekeeping training institutes, including the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana and the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School in Mali, by enhancing curricula, providing equipment and supporting specialized courses to strengthen female leadership in security roles.

25. The Institute contributes to maritime governance, security and sustainability through training, partnerships and institutional reforms. It offers specialized training for port authorities and coast guards with a focus on crisis response, marine pollution management and compliance with regional frameworks, such as the Yaoundé Architecture. In the 2023–2024 period, UNITAR and the Interregional Maritime Security Institute trained 452 participants from ports in West and Central Africa. Recently initiated projects in Malaysia, Yemen and Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, are enhancing security, maritime employment and environmental protection while fostering international trade through improved port governance and optimized logistics.

26. The UNITAR Learning Solutions Section serves as an innovation hub and develops scalable training-of-trainers solutions for the Division for Peace and other UNITAR bodies. These initiatives strengthen organizations and promote sustainable impact through local ownership. UNITAR digital training-of-trainers solutions were shortlisted in the Peace category of the “SDG Digital Gamechangers Award”, at an event held in September 2024. This achievement showcases the power of digital learning for sustainable development and the commitment to innovation that characterizes UNITAR. The section also launched an artificial intelligence prompt lab to enhance training design and delivery, alongside a masterclass series on artificial intelligence and learning design.

## **B. People**

27. Under the strategic framework’s people pillar, UNITAR continues to focus on promoting well-being and health for all, including the protection and empowerment of groups that have been marginalized and made vulnerable. Its wide portfolio of

projects, which are focused on improving quality of life for people and local communities, is implemented largely by the International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders, now comprising 33 affiliated centres across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe. The network amplifies UNITAR efforts to provide in-country capacity-building and training and serves as a hub for the exchange of knowledge among government officials, the private sector, academia and civil society in areas related to sustainable development. The network continued to expand, with activities reaching 241,190 beneficiaries in 2023 and 2024.

28. The Institute contributed to advancing global health through its partnership with Empower School of Health, launched in 2023. Under this initiative, 360 students, the majority of whom were from developing countries and the least developed countries, pursued Masters degree and postgraduate diploma programmes on topics related to health supply chain management, pharmaceutical management and digital health and data management. Building on its partnerships with the Ministries of Health in Argentina and Malaysia, UNITAR expanded efforts in policy development and capacity-building for sustainable plasma management through the “Plasma4Life” knowledge hub, promoting evidence-based decision-making and multi-stakeholder engagement. It successfully completed three-year value-based healthcare projects with the Ministries of Health in Rwanda and Türkiye and the Global Surgery Foundation, which are aimed at improving breast cancer diagnosis and treatment policies.

29. The Institute continued its efforts to fight noncommunicable diseases through its collaboration with the Defeat Noncommunicable Diseases Partnership, as well as through the promotion of digital health innovation and accessible and accredited training. In 2024, UNITAR designed a new initiative to support the Academy of the World Health Organization (WHO) in developing, marketing and administering health-related e-learning and face-to-face learning solutions, leveraging expertise from academic institutions and other strategic partners. The initiative led to the migration of 123 health training courses on to the WHO Academy learning platform. The collaboration with WHO underscores the role of UNITAR as an important partner, ensuring that public health professionals have access to high-quality, user-friendly and effective learning resources.

30. In order to address challenges in scaling up the response to noncommunicable diseases, UNITAR, WHO and other partners launched a programme to support young researchers from low- and middle-income countries. From over 100 applications, applicants from eight countries were selected, resulting in the publication of WHO policy briefs on addressing childhood diabetes (Cameroon), restricting sugary beverages and analysing the uneven implementation of smoking legislation (China), promoting healthy ageing (Egypt), strengthening health system capacity (Ethiopia), mobile-based self-management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (India), involving people living with diabetes in policymaking (Peru), addressing drug-related problems (Russian Federation) and integrating diabetes care with tuberculosis treatment (Uganda).

31. UNITAR has further strengthened its efforts to promote good governance through the promotion of human rights capacities and anti-corruption initiatives. Since 2023, UNITAR has been working with the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption to strengthen parliamentarians’ work on anti-corruption measures through a range of training and other capacity-building events. In addition, UNITAR will launch an online platform to provide parliamentarians with key resources on combating corruption in June 2025. In partnership with the Human Rights Commission of Saudi Arabia, Majmaah University and the International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders in Saudi Arabia, UNITAR developed a human rights

expertise programme that covers topics on leadership, geopolitics and public policy. A total of 130 professionals were trained during the first phase of the programme.

32. Another significant initiative under the people pillar is helping Member States to implement actions to improve road safety and strengthen sustainable mobility. UNITAR launched its joint project with the International Automobile Federation, “SafeForAll&ForLife”, and will provide training to an estimated 730 beneficiaries through 13 modules consisting of 55 specialized topics. The training modules will be hosted on a newly created online learning platform.

33. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and its Global Education and Training Institute, UNITAR joined forces with WHO to offer dedicated training to local government officials aimed at enhancing capacities for risk reduction and resilience planning, including in relation to health threat risk management.

34. UNITAR and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development, through their partnership under the Digital Government Academy, continued their efforts to bridge the digital divide and foster more efficient, responsive, transparent and citizen-friendly governments. This partnership has been central to the provision of comprehensive training that has enabled civil servants to build and manage digital platforms without the need for information technology programming skills, including by using no-code development platforms. Around 800 participants from government, civil society, the private sector and international organizations, including United Nations entities, have gained access to these learning initiatives and more than 1,000 participants have benefited from using the online platforms, including to register companies as employers and regularize hundreds of jobs.

35. As part of its efforts to promote healthy and inclusive ageing, UNITAR continued the virtual round-table series on mainstreaming knowledge on ageing in partnership with other United Nations entities and other partners and in line with efforts envisaged in Our Common Agenda. In 2023 and 2024, the series focused on access to justice, labour markets, political participation, health and social care services, cultural and leisure activities and quality of life for older persons. Since the series started, 90 speakers have shared their experiences and 1,367 persons with different backgrounds from over 120 countries have participated in the series.

36. In 2023, at the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018–2028, the Institute’s Global Water Academy launched an initiative on advancing global water sustainability through training, research and partnerships. Since its launch, the Global Water Academy has led collaborative efforts with UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, hosted 18 events with 8,000 participants from 147 countries and launched a course on big data for water sustainability. In 2024, UNITAR became a member of UN-Water and helped to draft the United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation, which was approved later that year by the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

## C. Planet

37. Under the strategic framework’s planet pillar, UNITAR works to support the conservation, restoration and safeguarding of the planet for present and future generations by fostering a green, low-carbon and climate-resilient transition, strengthening the sustainable management of chemicals and waste and undertaking research to support policies for a circular economy. In order to enhance climate action,



the Institute continues to serve as secretariat of the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership, a global initiative that supports countries in the design and implementation of systematic, recurrent and results-oriented climate change learning under article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

38. Education is crucial to addressing the existential threat of climate change and the relevance of the Learning Partnership has been attested to by the more than 1 million platform users from all over the world. The platform offers around 65 free courses, in several languages, that are focused on climate change and the green economy transition. Other learning opportunities, such as e-workshops and learning sessions held during major climate change conferences and similar events, known as “climate classrooms”, are also provided to specific groups on various more specific climate-related topics.

39. At the national level, the Learning Partnership assists countries in advancing climate change learning to support the implementation of their nationally determined contributions and other climate change commitments. The main developments in 2024 were the signing of a political declaration on climate change education by 13 States in the Sahel region and the development of a concept for a related \$20 million investment programme. UNITAR continues its active engagement with the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, a prominent alliance comprising four other United Nations entities (the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)), eight funding partners and 22 partner countries that work together to transform economies into drivers of sustainability. The UNITAR contribution to the Partnership is focused on capacity development for individuals and training institutions. The Partnership involves work with resident coordinators around the world to deliver tailored support to countries, allow for the exchange of best practices and leverage the United Nations system for green economic transformation. In this context, UNITAR is leading targeted training sessions on macroeconomic modelling for key national stakeholders, in close collaboration with economists based in offices of resident coordinators and linked to the Development Coordination Office.

40. In 2025, UNITAR is providing direct support to 15 countries in close collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and ILO for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. In collaboration with UNEP, UNITAR will provide learning opportunities on polychlorinated biphenyls in support of the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

41. Based at the UNITAR office in Bonn, the Sustainable Cycles Programme leads innovative research and training programmes on solutions for the sustainable production, consumption and disposal of ubiquitous goods. Globally, the generation of electronic waste is increasing five times faster than e-waste recycling documented to date, according to *The Global E-waste Monitor 2024*, which was published by the Sustainable Cycles Programme in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

42. According to the *Regional E-waste Monitor for the Western Balkans 2023*, also published by the Sustainable Cycles Programme, e-waste is on the rise in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. In “2050 Electrical and Electronic Waste Outlook in West Asia” published jointly by UNEP and UNITAR, two contrasting future scenarios for e-waste management in Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the State of Palestine are provided. At the time

of reporting, 99.9 per cent of e-waste was unmanaged or mismanaged. The transition towards a circular economy may result in up to a 33 per cent reduction in the amount of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market and up to 14 per cent less e-waste generation.

43. UNITAR is coordinating the work of the E-waste Coalition, a partnership initiative with ITU, ILO, UNEP, UNIDO, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the International Trade Centre, WHO and the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to increase collaboration, build partnerships and more efficiently provide support to Member States to address the e-waste challenge.

44. As the world gathers momentum in tackling plastic pollution through legally binding instruments, robust data are the backbone of meaningful action. UNEP and UNITAR are jointly working on a statistical guideline for measuring flows of plastic throughout the life cycle. The guideline will address the lack of a globally agreed-upon statistical methodology for measuring flows of plastic at the national, regional and global levels.

## **D. Prosperity**

45. Under the strategic framework's prosperity pillar, UNITAR works to promote inclusive and sustainable economic development for all, with a focus on creating decent work opportunities and addressing the urgent need for reskilling and upskilling in an era of rapid technological transformation. To this end, UNITAR has collaborated with diverse partners, including multilateral development banks, regional training institutions, private entities, academic institutions and United Nations entities, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital transition.

46. These challenges are particularly acute in developing countries and regions affected by conflict or instability. In response, UNITAR has adopted an integrated approach that combines capacity-building with practical support for sustainable and inclusive economic development, consolidating its initiatives around three strategic priorities: (a) digital transformation and artificial intelligence readiness, including comprehensive reskilling programmes through the "Prosperity Alliance" initiative; (b) sustainable and resilient entrepreneurship and innovation through the Resilient Ideas and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Lab; and (c) economic security and financial integrity through regional cooperation and capacity-building, including the "Leaders for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Sea and Human Security" initiative.

47. The launch of the "Prosperity Alliance" initiative in 2024 was a major strategic development. It enables governments, non-governmental organizations, academia and enterprises to collaborate with UNITAR on efforts towards sustainable inclusive economic development, particularly for young people and women; serves as a platform for mobilizing resources and promoting innovation; and embodies the Institute's commitment to strengthening partnerships to generate sustainable and inclusive prosperity. Under the initiative, alliances have been established in China and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and will offer specialized courses in environmental, social and governance factors, trade facilitation, frontier technology, entrepreneurship and digital economy, reaching stakeholders across Asia, Europe and beyond.

48. The Institute's commitment to digital transformation and artificial intelligence readiness was demonstrated through its series of artificial intelligence strategy masterclasses, which brought together government officials from 18 countries to develop frameworks for the responsible adoption of artificial intelligence. In addition,

UNITAR expanded its digital upskilling programmes through partnerships with technology leaders, including Microsoft and IBM. The programmes, which included specialized training in data analytics, information and communications technology security and emerging technologies, reached over 7,000 learners, including women refugees from Ukraine hosted in Poland and learners across 24 African countries.

49. The Resilient Ideas and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Lab, which formerly the Great Ideas Space initiative, demonstrates the Institute's integrated approach to sustainable and resilient entrepreneurship. In 2024, the Lab supported over 3,200 entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq and the Sudan in ventures to improve food security and economic resilience. Its success in Afghanistan was notable, with over 2,195 women and young people from 31 provinces engaged in business innovation and entrepreneurship training. The Lab also conducted an Africa-wide women's empowerment programme in entrepreneurship and financial literacy in partnership with the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, reaching over 5,700 women living in four regional economic communities across Africa.

50. As part of efforts to address economic security challenges, UNITAR strengthened its regional cooperation through its "Leaders for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Sea and Human Security" initiative, which engaged nearly 1,000 professionals from countries in Asia and the Pacific in efforts to address marine, human and economic security challenges. The Institute expanded its trade and food security training in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), reaching over 130 government officials across Latin America, the Near East and North Africa. In addition, UNITAR hosted its third conference on financial technology, during which the opportunities and risks of sustainable development were examined, with particular attention given to security and ecological considerations.

51. Integrating digital technology into the learning experience, including by delivering many training sessions in a hybrid format, has facilitated engagement and accessibility for UNITAR learners. Using a low-tech, mobile-first microlearning platform that is accessible offline, along with other digital platforms, has allowed 15,464 participants, 10,670 of whom are women, to continue learning, even those with an unreliable electricity supply or Internet connection. The use of virtual reality in certain learning materials has allowed participants to go beyond theory and immerse themselves in experiential learning.

## **E. Cross-cutting programme areas**

52. In addition to the thematic pillars of peace, people, planet and prosperity, UNITAR works in three cross-cutting areas: programming aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the country level; support for evidence-based policies through technologies, including geospatial technologies; and multilateral diplomacy.

### **Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

53. Given the surge in interest in harnessing systems thinking and strategic foresight to achieve sustainable development in the face of increased uncertainties, UNITAR has been working with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and resident coordinator offices to build related capacities. The Ministry of Finance of Seychelles has been championing these innovative approaches in the context of the multi-year budgeting process to bolster the implementation of the national development strategy, enhance collaborations within and across the portfolios of ministries and with other stakeholders, and accelerate public financial management reform. Following a

training of trainers, a team of national experts took the lead in building the capacities of high-level officials and technical staff across all levels of government. In Mauritius, UNITAR was part of the effort of the United Nations country team to strengthen integrated planning and monitoring competencies in the country. UNITAR further provided support to the country team in Madagascar on using systems thinking for a more integrated common country analysis.

54. The joint “UN SDG: Learn” knowledge gateway and partnership led by UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College has grown to 68 partners, reaching more than 830,000 users. UNITAR e-learning courses developed with other United Nations system partners were completed by 61,736 learners in 2023–2024, the highest number of learners to date. In addition to providing space for knowledge-exchange on artificial intelligence and inclusion in e-learning, the knowledge gateway has given rise to two initiatives. The first is a joint initiative with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as part of which UNITAR worked with 16 universities to develop the “Leaders in Higher Education Alliance and Programme – For Accelerating Sustainability Transformations”. The first leadership dialogue of the initiative at the level of rectors was held in July 2024, resulting in a joint statement that was delivered at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The second initiative is the “Capabilities 4 the Future Hub”, developed by UNIDO, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and UNITAR, which aims to support more inclusive and greener global value chains by offering sector- and region-specific learning opportunities for industrial authorities, young people in vocational education and training, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

55. The Institute continued its capacity-building and learning support to national statistical offices. UNITAR has become one of the three United Nations entities on the steering committee of the new Collaborative on Citizen Data, comprising 10 members, and contributed to the development of the Copenhagen Framework on Citizen Data, which was presented to the Statistical Commission at its fifty-fifth session. UNITAR has been supporting several countries, in particular small island developing States, in the development of experimental data projects on the use of non-traditional data sources in order to close a number of vital data gaps, such as those relating to improved population estimates and monitoring of data relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. UNITAR was appointed Chair of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training and in that role, has contributed to implementing the Network’s tools at the country level, including by providing direct support to Colombia and Morocco on statistical training needs assessments and competency development plans and strategies.

### **Optimizing the use of geospatial technologies for evidence-based decisions**

56. The United Nations Satellite Centre continues to provide United Nations entities and Member States with access to geospatial information solutions for responding to humanitarian emergencies and developed its work in other fields of application such as health, food security and the protection of cultural heritage.

57. Between June 2023 and December 2024, the Centre activated its emergency mapping service 130 times and produced 959 geospatial-derived products on 62 different countries, 52 per cent of which are countries in special situations. Support was provided to United Nations entities for their work in response to the conflict in Gaza, the earthquake in Morocco, Cyclone Chido in Mozambique and the vast floods that hit East Africa in March and April 2024 and West and Central Africa in August–October 2024. As the number of requests continues to increase, the Centre will strive to expand its emergency mapping service.

58. Recognizing the importance of cultural heritage preservation in conflict-affected and vulnerable regions, the United Nations Satellite Centre and UNESCO extended their partnership on protection efforts through the systematic monitoring of cultural sites in Gaza, Lebanon and Ukraine, as well as on the innovative digitization of World Heritage Sites in the Middle East and North Africa region, while building national capacities through specialized geospatial training for heritage professionals.

59. In the field of human rights and justice, the United Nations Satellite Centre continued to work with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including its many fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry with various investigative mechanisms, as well as with the International Criminal Court. The Centre also developed training curricula on the use of satellite imagery as evidence in justice proceedings.

60. Capacity development remains an essential work stream under the programme of work of the United Nations Satellite Centre and comprises training courses, technical backstopping activities, the development of integrated solutions and platforms, and knowledge exchange activities. During the reporting period, the Centre developed knowledge and skills on geographic information systems of over 1,140 stakeholders (32 per cent women), with significant representation of local and national government sectors (48 per cent) and an emphasis on inclusivity through engagement with participants from more than 60 countries, including a particular focus on the least developed countries (55 per cent) and small island developing States (16 per cent).

61. In the field of disaster risk management, the United Nations Satellite Centre provided support to national stakeholders for strengthening climate change resilience and disaster risk reduction. Since July 2023, the Centre has delivered 17 training events to a total of 275 participants (37 per cent women), developed five web applications, provided 24 technical backstopping sessions, fully operationalized a knowledge hub with more than 400 registered users and supported climate finance proposals that secured \$4.2 million for adaptation initiatives.

62. The United Nations Satellite Centre also developed strategic partnerships with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to implement a global methodology for infrastructure resilience in Bhutan, Chile, Madagascar and Tonga, with the aim of enhancing the resilience of infrastructure through strengthened governance and contributing to the delivery of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

63. The United Nations Satellite Centre and FAO cooperated on the development of digital tools to visualize district-level food system risks and vulnerabilities. These tools, which are country-specific vulnerability and risk mapping dashboards, are aimed at enhancing disaster risk management and food system resilience, empowering stakeholders to address food security challenges more effectively and providing data on the state of food systems, for example in Gaza.

64. The United Nations Satellite Centre continues to benefit from the strong support of the European Organization for Nuclear Research, which hosts the Centre's information technology infrastructure. This partnership allows state-of-the-art computing power, data management and information and communications technology security to benefit United Nations entities in the field of geospatial information.

65. The United Nations Satellite Centre continued to invest in innovation, namely in the use of new satellite sensors such as very high-resolution nighttime light sensors and their data, and in data integration and data processing using artificial intelligence. The Centre has developed a flood impact-based forecasting tool so as to expand its humanitarian support capabilities. The system provides 10-day advance flood

warnings using weather forecast data from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, with 75 per cent probability thresholds, thereby delivering estimates of the impact on affected populations and agricultural lands. The tool has been successfully tested in Chad, Ethiopia and Nigeria, and the innovation aligns with global trends in anticipatory humanitarian action, where early investments in preparedness yield significant savings in post-disaster response costs.

66. In the area of satellite data processing using artificial intelligence, the United Nations Satellite Centre is working with Google and Global Pulse on the development of a damage assessment model that harnesses artificial intelligence and is envisioned as a machine learning-based tool that could be used to perform automatic building damage assessment, which would allow for estimates of infrastructure and housing losses and enable the mapping of shelters for displaced populations. The Centre has implemented its FloodAI tool in six countries and initiated the development of a revised version of the tool.

### **Multilateral diplomacy**

67. The strengthening of delegates' knowledge, skills and awareness for effective participation in the United Nations remains a strategic focus of UNITAR work. The Institute provides training and capacity-building for diplomats, officials and private sector specialists, equipping them with the tools to address complex global challenges and, in turn, reinforce the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations.

68. As part of efforts to expand its academic partnerships, UNITAR recently launched five new Masters degree programmes in collaboration with universities worldwide, covering digital diplomacy, public international law, gender and diplomacy, data science, and artificial intelligence and dispute resolution. It now offers 15 joint Masters programmes with 11 universities, equipping participants with the skills needed for international careers that create positive impact.

69. The Institute remains particularly dedicated to expanding training, resources and thought leadership with a focus on artificial intelligence and a view to shaping the future of diplomacy and international cooperation in the digital age. As artificial intelligence continues to transform global governance and diplomacy, the Institute remains committed to equipping stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the evolving landscape through initiatives such as the certificate on artificial intelligence and professional skills, briefing series on artificial intelligence and the "Artificial Intelligence and International Affairs Bulletin".

70. The Institute's office in New York continues to connect Member States and the United Nations by offering learning opportunities for delegates regarding the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, with a focus on the relationship between the three bodies. Programmes also cover elections, human security and the drafting of resolutions. In 2023, UNITAR concluded two successful fellowships for delegates from the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. In partnership with Columbia Law School, UNITAR offers training on mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution. In 2024, the New York Office reached over 10,000 participants through its training programmes.

71. Since 2019, the annual learning, training and practice series delivered by UNITAR on the margins of the high-level political forum has become an important event that highlights the efforts required on the ground to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

### III. Preparation of the strategic framework for 2026–2029

72. UNITAR is conducting a stocktaking exercise and extensive stakeholder consultations so as to ensure that the strategic framework for the period 2026–2029 will be aligned with global trends and evolving capacity-building and research needs at the country level. Strategic foresight, with support from the United Nations Futures Lab Network, allows UNITAR to anticipate future challenges and opportunities in order to plan and develop effective scenarios and strategies. The skills relating to the United Nations 2.0 approach will be integral to the new strategic framework, including by ensuring that innovation, behavioural science, enhanced data strategies and digital transformation inform the inward and outward looking dimensions of the framework. An internal task force is driving these efforts, with cross-divisional collaboration, staff engagement initiatives and participation in United Nations system-wide communities that are focused on the quintet of change. These initiatives aim to position UNITAR as a future-ready Institute that is responsive to shifting global needs, agile and equipped, in order to increase its impact on training, research and capacity development for stronger institutions and systems in developing countries so as to advance efforts for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Goals.

### IV. Financial situation of the Institute

73. The Institute's financial situation continues to show growth and increasing stability. Total income for the biennium 2022–2023 was \$83.7 million, an 11 per cent increase over income in 2020–2021, which amounted to \$75.4 million.

74. Nevertheless, the Institute continues to be heavily reliant on a small number of donors. The top 10 donors contributed some 84.2 per cent of the total contributions for the year 2023. UNITAR has concluded several multi-year agreements with partners, thereby significantly increasing its balance of receivables.

75. Overall, UNITAR remains in sound financial health. Although its accumulated surpluses decreased from \$54.953 million in 2022 to \$46.007 million in 2023, due mainly to actuarial variation loss, the net assets balance is still high. There was an increase of \$2.50 million in liabilities, largely due to the increase in advanced receipts and employee benefit liabilities. Current ratios indicate that assets are sufficient to meet the Institute's short-term and long-term liabilities. Key financial indicators remain robust, as evidenced by the high ratios between current assets and current liabilities and total assets versus total liabilities.

76. In November 2024, at its sixty-fifth session, the UNITAR Board of Trustees adopted the revised programme budget for 2024–2025 of \$97.382 million, representing a \$7.811 million increase over the initial programme budget for 2024–2025, in the amount of \$89.571 million.

77. The Institute received an unqualified audit opinion from the Board of Auditors on its financial statements for 2022 and 2023.

### V. Recommendations

78. It is recommended that UNITAR continue to grow its programming in alignment with the 2030 Agenda, deepen its beneficiary outreach and explore ways to strengthen engagement at the country level through enhanced linkages with the United Nations system with a view to ensuring that its programming has greater impact.

79. It is also recommended that Member States lend their full support, including through unearmarked funds, in order to enable the Institute to invest in scaling up its support for national capacity-building, learning and other needs.

80. The Institute also should intensify its engagement with other stakeholders, including the business and private sectors, foundations and relevant United Nations entities, so as to strengthen and expand support to countries, particularly those in special situations.

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