

Partners and Collaborations

Landmark visit to China

UNITAR Executive Director visited China from 17 to 20 June at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Beijing, the official visit formally commenced a dialogue between UNITAR and China in view of establishing cooperation with the Government of the People's Republic of China and academic institutions, and of strengthening UNITAR's presence in China.



Carlos Lopes and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei.
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In Shanghai, Mr. Lopes visited Fudan University and gave a lecture entitled "Are we listening? Identities facing a deep multi-faceted global crisis", before some 600 students and faculty members. He also visited the associated training centre CIFAL Shanghai set up in 2003 under the auspices of the Shanghai Municipal Commission on Economy and Information. About 1,000 officials benefited from CIFAL training activities during the years 2008 and 2009.

The Water Think-tank: for an Integrated and Sustainable Water Resource Management in the Mediterranean Region

Announced at the occasion of the 5th World Water Forum (Istanbul, March 2009), the Partnership Agreement was signed in Monaco on 10th October by the four founding members: Foundation Prince Albert II of Monaco, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Veolia Environnement and Plan Bleu.

Based on an in-depth benchmark analysis and various consultations with experts in this area, the Water Think Tank promotes integrated and sustainable water resource management in the Mediterranean region through a research - action process. The initiative focuses on designing tools and methodologies that take into consideration the needs of Local Authorities in the region, and will help them overcome the challenges related to water management.

UNITAR and Open University UK: working towards increasing the protection of civilians in peace operations

UNITAR and Open University UK jointly held the Wilton Park Conference on Peacekeeping and Protection of Civilians on 26 October. While examining the challenges of protecting civilians in conflict and post-conflict situations and the role of peacekeeping operations in helping address these challenges, the 3-day conference considered the needs and methodologies for more effective peacekeeping training on the protection of civilians, and suggested mechanisms to strengthen the protection of civilians in field missions across the world.

In that vein, UNITAR will shortly be launching its new an e-learning course on the Protection of Civilians. Designed in collaboration with Open University UK, it includes a module on sexual exploitation and abuse to raise awareness among potential personnel of peacekeeping operations.



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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Knowledge to lead

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One more step towards excellence

By Carlos Lopes, Executive Director of UNITAR



July 2007, the Board of Trustees endorsed the Strategic Reform Plan of UNITAR and launched a deep and irrevocable momentum towards achieving our goal of being a centre of excellence.

For the "major" research & training institute of the UN system, being a center of excellence is challenging and has many implications. First it means investing a lot of efforts to ensure that we meet the training needs of Member States, and that our beneficiaries are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully face current and future challenges such as climate change, international migration and development, or the protection of civilians in peace operations.

It involves also strengthening ties with developing and emerging economies in order to continuously assess needs and work closely with institutions at regional, national and local level, and with knowledge centers and field-based development partners. I am pleased to announce the forthcoming opening of the 1st UNITAR representational office in Brazil.

It implies investing in research on knowledge systems to develop cutting-edge methodologies and tools, building partnerships with the most advanced academies worldwide and with private sector that develop tomorrow's technologies. The challenge is however to make sure that we are equipped with the tools to measure how accurate, effective and efficient our activities are. This has become a reality with the introduction of result-based management across the Institute, and the establishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Section.

As part of the UN family, the Institute also provides a platform for other UN entities on key issues of concern, and serves as chair of inter-agency processes e.g. the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the Global Migration Group, or as convener of high-level seminars and discussions e.g. the Retreat of the UN Secretary-General, or the Geneva Lecture Series.

In This Issue

Special Guest

Is protection of civilians given enough priority?

Trends & Activities

One UN training platform on Climate Change

Knowledge to lead

Towards more robust evaluation

Partners and Collaborations

Landmark visit to China

The Water Think Tank

The protection of civilians in peace operations

In Focus

UN to speak with one Voice on Global Migration

4 November 2009 - The Global Migration Group (GMG) held a press conference in Athens during the inter-governmental Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) to highlight and discuss how to bring a coherent response on behalf of the major UN and non-UN agencies working in this field, to the global economic crisis and its impacts on migration and wellbeing of migrants. The conference presented the insights and policy recommendations of the GMG.

Under UNITAR's chairmanship since June 2009, the GMG has progressed significantly in implementing its first ever annual work plan. Working hand-in-hand with UNDP, the future GMG chair during the first half of 2010, UNITAR has galvanized the Group around three strategic priorities: 1) to instill a strong sense of purpose and develop a coherent voice for the GMG on current migration policy and governance challenges, most urgently with respect to the global recession and its impact on migration; 2) to review and streamline the GMG's mandate and working methods in order to strengthen its effectiveness and value added; and 3) to support the Global Forum on Migration and Development through greater information sharing and substantive contributions.

A call for action and "clever" leadership emerged from the annual gathering of the Heads and representatives of the GMG member organizations on 9 October outside Geneva. A shared vision was formulated and GMG members vowed to play an active role to promote a rights and evidence-based approach to international migration, and to foster greater inter-agency and policy coherence in this field.

Special Guest

Is protection of civilians given enough priority?

Interview with Satish Nambiar, UNITAR Peacekeeping Training Programme Advisory Board member



Lt. General Satish Nambiar has served the UN as the first Force Commander and Head of Mission of the UN forces in the former Yugoslavia, at the level of Under Secretary-General.

He had the distinction of setting up the Mission under the most difficult conditions, and commanding it for a year from March 1992 to March 1993.

What are the major peace operations challenges today?

Peace operations are facing three major challenges today: the use of force in peace operations; the absence of developed countries from peace operations; and the quality of training.

The issue of the use of force in peace operations is particularly pressing today, given the fact that many missions are being deployed in settings where hostilities are still ongoing or where the parties to the conflict are not necessarily respecting the provisions of the peace agreement. The limited contribution of developed countries in terms of personnel to the peace operations on the ground has serious implications on the conduct of operations for two reasons: firstly in terms of capabilities, and secondly in terms of implementing decisions taken.

The third issue is related to the second one. Many of the countries that contribute the most to peace operations today are from the developing world and are often not in the best position to provide highly trained personnel. Adequate training would certainly increase the ability to perform effectively on the field and therefore would reduce risks posed to other peacekeepers and hosting communities.

Could you tell us a concrete story about the protection of civilians?

In 1992 I was serving as the Head of UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia, which was set up for the primary purpose of the stabilization in Croatia. The fighting broke out in Bosnia Herzegovina in mid June 1992. Around the end of October, as the situation was deteriorating, I received a phone call from the then Under Secretary General (USG) for Peacekeeping asking me how many troops I would need to put seven safe areas in place.

When we spoke again the next day, I told him that for the establishment of seven geographically delineated area within which all weapons are removed and troops deployed to ensure that no people with weapons come from outside to endanger the civilian populations, I would need around 55 – 60.000 troops. I left the command of the mission on 2nd March 1993 without having heard back from him on this aspect.

This story is to underline that if a task has to be done effectively, you need to be provided with adequate resources; because otherwise you risk giving a false sense of security to the civilian population.

I felt a deep sense of regret when in 1994 the Security Council passed a resolution to establish some safe areas, but without providing the Head of the Mission the adequate resources to fulfil the mandate. And we are well aware of what happened in Srebrenica. It is no coincidence that when NATO deployed IFOR after the signing of the Dayton Agreement in November 1995, they went in with about 60,000 troops.



How would you see UNITAR's role in the field of peace operations?

I think that UNITAR can play an effective role in preparing peacekeepers for the type of tasks they will be required to undertake in mission areas and providing leadership in promoting training initiatives that will assist member states prepare their personnel for effectively implementing their mandate in peace operations.

UNITAR needs to put in place creative and innovative ways to accomplish its mission, and in doing so, build on the experiences of the past. The major challenge is to recognise the complex nature of peace operations today and in particular the emerging focus on robust peace operations. By factoring this into its various training initiatives UNITAR will contribute greatly both in terms of preparing personnel for deployment in the field and in fostering dialogue and coordination among the various players in the arena of peace operations.

Trends & Activities

One UN Training Service Platform on Climate Change - UN CC:Learn

by Achim Halpaap, Associate Director, Environment Unit

The wealth of knowledge and learning resources available in the UN system on climate change is tremendous and growing, creating opportunities for information sharing and collaboration among UN agencies. This was one of the key conclusions of the first meeting of the Steering Group for the One UN Training Service Platform on Climate Change, UN CC:Learn, which brought together 17 UN agencies at UNITAR Headquarters from 29 to 30 October.

Embedded within the One UN Climate Change Action Framework of the UN Chief Executives Board, UN CC:Learn seeks to create a common platform owned by all participating UN agencies with the goal to respond effectively to climate change learning and skills development priorities in partner countries.

The idea of developing UN CC:Learn received momentum at the 2008 Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland, where a number of official side events revealed that UN agencies are scaling up their climate change training activities.

The two-day meeting fostered a common understanding for the three main activities areas covered by CC: Learn: Knowledge Management; Development of a One UN Training Package on Climate Change; and support of country-based pilot projects on Strengthening Human Resources, Learning and Skill Development on Climate Change. Under the Knowledge Management pillar, one of the deliverables of UN CC:Learn is a searchable Inventory of UN Climate Change Training and Learning Materials which will be online in time for the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to foster information sharing about ongoing and planned UN climate change training and learning initiatives and to explore opportunities of working together as One UN, both at the international and country level. It also advanced the concept of thematic learning packages for specialized topics of climate change.

Initial support in 2009 has been provided by UNDP, UNITAR and UNFPA, with UNITAR acting as secretariat of the platform.

For further information please contact: unccllearn@unitar.org



Knowledge to lead

Towards more robust evaluation

By Brook Boyer, Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit

As the Institute embraces a results-oriented professional culture, monitoring and evaluation will play an increasingly central role in project/programme planning, delivery, implementation and follow-up. Having pursued various approaches to evaluation for years, UNITAR is harmonizing practices in view of being able to better extract information on the Institute's performance at the corporate level. Moreover, and similar to experiences of other organizations, the need to pursue evaluation at the outcome and impact levels of programming is now widely recognized across UNITAR.

With the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, capacities to pursue more rigorous and harmonized evaluation practices which will, over time, enable UNITAR to improve its accountabilities, effectiveness and efficiency.

The Institute's performance will be measured not only in terms of numbers of beneficiaries and events (as impressive as they may be), but also, and more importantly, by the changes in behavior and developmental conditions which result from its training interventions. Enhanced evaluation practices will also play an important part in improving the Institute's effectiveness, efficiency and decision-making by ensuring that lessons-learned and other generated knowledge are incorporated into future programming.



As a first step in this direction, consultations are now underway both within and outside UNITAR in view of identifying 'best practices' and discussing how such practices/approaches can be integrated into a corporate-level monitoring and evaluation system. This includes, for instance, taking part in a UNSSC-led study on evaluation practices of the seven United Nations research and training institutes.