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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Knowledge to lead

New Partners & Collaborations



Open University UK
Promoting excellence in distance learning

Open University UK and UNITAR are engaged in jointly developing and deploying modern learning and training environments. This cooperation builds on mutual strengths, to achieve excellence in training delivery and curriculum design based on ultimate academic thinking in international development fields. An on-line course on "Peacekeeping and civilian protection" will be launched first quarter 2009.



Spain
Becoming a major donor of UNITAR

Further to the decision of the Council of Minister, a cooperation agreement has been signed with the Government of Spain, covering three main pillars: Establishing Spanish as a working language of UNITAR to better address the training needs of IberoAmerican countries; Strengthening capacity and achieving recently established recommendations in the fields of international migration and development; and Enhancing the application of Knowledge Systems Innovation approaches.



INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI)
E-Learning Project for a Global Audience of Public Debt Auditors

UNITAR and INTOSAI from Oslo - Norway, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, have launched a joint e-Learning initiative for Public Debt Auditors from Supreme Audit Institutions. The joint project emphasizes the importance of the use of new information and communication technologies for training outreach and cost-effectiveness.



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CERN, European Organization for Nuclear Research
The United Nations strengthens its collaboration with the CERN

On the 8th of December, UNITAR signed a new cooperation framework with the European Organization for Nuclear Research, CERN. In signing this agreement, UNITAR intends to develop the long standing and fruitful collaboration that its operational satellite applications programme "UNOSAT" already had with CERN. Thanks to this partnership UNITAR will benefit from the CERN IT infrastructure, and the partners will notably engage themselves in joint research projects to develop the practical uses of high technologies for the realisation of the mission and goals of the entire United Nations system.



African Institute of South Africa (AISA)
Enhancing capacity to promote peace, security and prosperity in Africa

The cooperation between AISA and UNITAR aims to provide a structure for leveraging and developing strengths in training and research to better address African needs. Both institutions are committed to develop scholarly and scientific ties of cooperation and encourages academic exchange and collaboration in the areas of training and research for the benefit of the Member States of the African Union and the United Nations.

Newsletter Winter 2008

Serving the System and moving South!

By Carlos Lopes, Executive Director UNITAR



After 18 months the main bulk of the reform of the Institute has been achieved. UNITAR is now better equipped to seize opportunities for meeting the world's current and future challenges.

With an increased responsiveness, effectiveness and reliability UNITAR is delivering high-level innovative and results-oriented training activities in three main areas: Environment - Peace, Security and Diplomacy - Governance. To support its training activities, research is conducted, focusing on knowledge systems, evaluation and monitoring of methodologies and their practical application in learning settings across UNITAR.

The Institute has recently been entrusted with a key set of responsibilities within the United Nations in convening high-level meetings for the UN Secretary General, who also participated in a number of highly visible events, including the Geneva Lecture Series in April 2008.

All this is important for UNITAR and undeniably contributes to raise the profile of the Institute whose purpose is to be a knowledge hub at the core of the UN system. This is however not a goal in itself, but a way for increasing the capacity and the image of the UN system to better respond to the needs of Member States and their citizens.

For UNITAR, it means increasing outreach by developing further its network of academic partners and specialized training centers, so as to facilitate and advance South-South cooperation. In the same vein, UNITAR is looking to expand its presence worldwide through the establishment of representation offices in strategic countries and the strengthening of its network of associated CIFAL centers.

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In Focus

Geneva Lecture Series • 2nd edition "Are Human Rights Universal?"

Nobel Prize Laureates Shirin Ebadi and Wole Soyinka are addressing the public at the Geneva Lecture Series on 10 December 2008. Remarks by H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco will follow an open debate with the public. The Prince Albert II of Monaco Fondation is a member of the Geneva Lecture Series Support Committee.

On the same day, the UN is commemorating the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is a special occasion for Geneva that hosts a large number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations involved in the promotion and protection of human rights.

While paying tribute to the achievements of the international community in forging a global culture of human rights, the Geneva Lecture Series aims to launch an open debate on the realization of the Declaration six decades after its adaptation.

What about the Geneva Lecture Series ?

The Geneva Lecture Series brings awareness of pressing global challenges to the public and civil society in Geneva and beyond, with a focus on how each individual can contribute to resolve such challenges. It also offers an intellectual anchor for the work of the United Nations and other international organizations and a mechanism to channel current thinking and research into policy-making. More on www.unitar.org/gls

Special Guest

Sharing UN values with the private sector

Francis Casorla, Former Secretary General of Veolia Environment



Francis Casorla made his career in the French magistracy and is currently President of the Etablissement Public du Palais de Justice de Paris. He serves UNITAR as an Associated Fellow.

Why are you committed with UNITAR?

FC: *The competence and expertise of UNITAR are universally recognized. My motivation to support the Institute comes first from the outside, when I was Secretary General of Veolia Environment between 2000 and 2003, and then since my appointment as an Associated Fellow.*

During the preparation of the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, the idea came to set up a series of regional workshops to disseminate expertise and best practices on the Global Compact principles, and more specifically in four main areas: Sustainable Urbanization and Environment, Local Economic Development, Local Governance, Health and Human Security.

The concept of the CIFAL network was then born as a multi-partnership platform, bringing together host cities, regional entities, international development organizations, regional associations of local authorities, academies, national governments and the private sector, including Veolia Environment and other leading companies.

According to you, what are the common values shared by the UN and the private sector?

FC: *Veolia, formerly Vivendi Environment, immediately adhered to the Global Compact and its ten principles. They were naturally integrated as a set of ethically-binding rules and governance tools for the Group. They are now applied to the heart of our business: the environmental field through precautionary approaches, greater responsibility, and the development and implementation of environmental-friendly technologies.*

These are clearly common values shared by the United Nations and the private sector, in which, as a former magistrate, I fully adhere to. This constituted a conducive framework to build sustainable and high quality relationship with the United Nations. UNITAR has become an important partner for the Group with which steady links have developed over the years.

CORE VALUES?

By our guest Francis CASORLA

Ethics, Prevention, Sustainability, Environmental protection

What topics are close to your heart at the moment?

FC: *Institutional risk prevention and the dynamic vision of sustainable development by strengthening local institutional capacity through the transfer of expertise from both the public and the private sector.*

International laws and recommendations are subject to special attention to permit the elaboration and the adoption of updated legislation, and the improvement of existing texts and information on civil and penal risks for companies and elected representatives.

There is also a need to study and define policies for risk prevention and protection of populations. Building methods for planning, monitoring and assessing those policies would allow stakeholders, including states representatives, local administrations, business entities, practitioners, academics and the civil society to share best practices.

Do you have an example of interaction where UNITAR and the private sector could build a partnership based on this theme?

FC: *A major seminar was held recently in Geneva, co-organized by UNITAR and the French National School of Magistrates, allowing judges, academics, corporate lawyers and researchers to exchange views on prevention and liability of environmental damages.*

Such an initiative has helped stakeholders, who knew little about each other, to reach a common understanding on the challenges ahead and how to act in a concerted manner.

From my point of view, the prospect of the next Earth Summit in 2012 will certainly encourage similar initiatives to respond to those concerns constantly expressed by the United Nations.

Trends & Activities

"Learning inspired by Hiroshima"

By Nassrine Azimi, Director Hiroshima Office

After five years of operation, the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, the only UN presence in this symbolic city, has already received some 3000 participants for its programmes, ranging from intensive week-long workshops to monthly roundtables and even an eight-month long fellowship.

What is the role of UNITAR in Hiroshima?

NA: *The Hiroshima Office adds to UNITAR's niche in training by bringing together experts from both within and outside of Asia, ensuring that an "Asian-specific" curriculum is developed and knowledge adapted to the needs and operating/cultural environment of Asia.*

Facts and figures about UNITAR Hiroshima Office

- Established – August 2003
- 38 workshops and conferences with 1165 experts participating
- 62 beneficiary countries
- 44 roundtables with 2163 attendees participating



Afghan Fellows visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial

What's the flagship of UNITAR in Hiroshima?

NA: *Six key themes are developed in response to specific training needs. Wherever possible, the Training of Trainers (T-o-T) approach is applied. One such example is the Fellowship for Afghanistan. This unique programme held in Kabul, Dehradun (India) and Hiroshima seeks to increase the capacity of Afghan professionals through a blend of on-site and distance-learning tools, involving a network of mentors worldwide.*

What's the long term benefit from your activities?

NA: *Graduates from previous fellowship cycles are continuously part of the curriculum review process. In all its programmes, the Office aspires to provide strong assistance to its remarkable alumni across Asia in their own efforts to carry the torch of national training initiatives, thus contributing to improving existing programmes and expanding new ones.*

What's next on your agenda?

NA: *Relying on the fields where Hiroshima has much universal resonance and in consultation with various partners, the Hiroshima Office is developing projects on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and on post-conflict reconstruction.*

Knowledge to lead

Excel in multilateral diplomacy: 5 quick steps

By Isabel Hubert, Associate Director, Training Department & Head, Peace, Security & Diplomacy and Brook Boyer, Manager Multilateral Diplomacy

Imagine arriving in Geneva on your first diplomatic posting or getting reassigned to any of the cities where the United Nations maintains a significant presence. To many new multilateral diplomats, the task often appears daunting. Integrating quickly into the United Nations work environment and participating in debates and discussions effectively and meaningfully requires knowledge, understanding and a set of core diplomacy skills.

1. UNITAR's commitment and role

UNITAR is committed to contributing to building an effective multilateral system. As a key UN training resource, the Institute's role is to provide assistance to all Member States and particularly the developing countries so diplomats have the knowledge, awareness and skills to pursue international cooperation and make the most of what the United Nations and its bodies, agencies and other forums have to offer.

2. Seize our global training opportunities

Through its core diplomacy training (CDT), the Institute offers a unique learning environment for diplomats to acquire knowledge and skills, share experiences, network, and develop deeper understanding of mutual interests. Intensive, practice-oriented executive training activities (e.g. briefings, seminars and workshops) are held in New York, Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, and in the cities hosting the regional commissions. Online training courses are also offered.

3. Know the UN inside and out, and perform!

Conined 'on the UN and by the UN', CDT focuses on contemporary topics and issues as well as core 'process' skills, such as drafting resolutions, chairing international conferences, conference diplomacy, negotiating effectively at the UN.

4. Access information and register now

CDT activities are announced to permanent missions throughout the year. Activities are also announced on the Institute's website at www.unitar.org/diplomacy and www.unitarny.org. Application forms may be downloaded and returned to UNITAR by fax or email.

5. Become part of it and share your experiences

The Institute attaches much importance to engaging diplomats before, during and after its various activities. Topics are identified and selected based on annual surveys and systematic post-workshop evaluations. By engaging diplomats during the activities, UNITAR is able to further improve on contents and methods, and even to identify possible new topics. Nearly 100 per cent of diplomats benefiting from a CDT activity would recommend the training to a colleague!