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UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

STRATEGIC REFORM PLAN 2007-2009

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Introduction

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research has made concrete contributions to developing the capacities of tens of thousands of people around the world. Over the years, UNITAR has built sustainable partnerships and accumulated experience, knowledge and capacities. These accomplishments have enabled UNITAR to respond to the growing demand for training for capacity development.

The growth and financial stability achieved over the past decade now allow UNITAR to seize new opportunities and meet future challenges. In order to accomplish this and as a first step, a transformation process was initiated which takes into consideration a number of factors and identified areas requiring improvement. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- While UNITAR has enjoyed significant expansion and innovation in the past, it has reached its limits in addressing the growing needs for training and research given its present institutional structure.
- Significant synergies exist across UNITAR activities which have not been systematically explored.
- A number of innovative methodologies have been developed, but have not been widely shared and further developed because of *ad hoc* approaches to internal knowledge management.
- Systematic opportunities to act as a service provider for international organizations and client countries have not been explored.
- The present mode of resource mobilization has created some stability within UNITAR, but the Institute as a whole and its personnel would benefit from a more secure resource base.

In general, the Institute as it currently operates and is structured has been successful in some areas, but it is not strategically positioned to make a significant future contribution towards addressing emerging training and capacity development needs of beneficiaries within a United Nations system that is moving towards a more integrated delivery framework. The draft Strategic Reform Plan has been developed to address these challenges and is structured as follows: following this introduction, the mission and goal of UNITAR are presented. The core of the plan is then presented around four strategic priorities: (1) to strengthen institutional capacity, (2) to enhance human capital, (3) to build and strengthen strategic partnerships, and (4) to rationalize organizational structure. These priorities provide a framework for the proposed actions and timeline for change found in the "Final Outcomes" document. Selected action items are used to illustrate new or thought-provoking ideas within each of the strategic priorities and are not meant to exclude the detailed contents and action plans of the Final Outcomes. The draft Strategic Reform Plan and the Final Outcomes are to be considered together.

The present draft Strategic Reform Plan addresses mainly internal and structural issues for a transitional period, during which time priority actions will be identified and progressively implemented. The immediate challenge is respecting commitments to our partners and beneficiaries and completing on-going activities, while enhancing quality, accountability and outreach in the spirit of the on-going reform of the United Nations.

Mission

UNITAR's mission is to deliver innovative training and conduct research on knowledge systems to develop the capacity of beneficiaries. Building on our experience, we optimize expertise, information and knowledge-sharing to achieve this mission.

Goal

Our goal is to be a centre of excellence, measured by international standards, recognized within and outside the United Nations system for standard-setting methodologies, high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems.

Strategic Priority 1

To Strengthen Institutional Capacity for Training and Research

To seize new opportunities that arise from the growing importance of training within the United Nations, it is imperative for UNITAR to continue strengthening its ability to deliver capacity development activities, including through training, knowledge-sharing, and research on knowledge systems.

Knowledge Systems

The Institute has identified its differentiating edge in the area of knowledge systems. It is an area where no other UN entity is specialized, allowing UNITAR to build synergies and complementarities within the framework of UN reform. We define knowledge systems as the combination of methodologies, tools and skills required to build, strengthen, use and retain capacity. Capacity development has already replaced the more common use of the expression "capacity building", in order to encompass the need to see capacity holistically and not limit ourselves to the first step in the process, which is to create it. It is also an acknowledgement that capacity never starts from scratch and rather needs an anchor based on ownership and leadership dimensions.

Knowledge systems take into account capacity requirements and allow the Institute to focus its interventions on methodologies that are particularly relevant for adult training. Training can be defined as any formal instructional learning activities that develop knowledge, skills and attributes linked to particular forms of employment. Training is increasingly demand driven, learner centred, cross-cultural, lifelong, professionally certified, and socially recognized. It acknowledges the use of techniques combining informal with more formal learning. Institutions specialized in training often measure impact and use benchmark indicators to improve their methods. Today's knowledge systems are challenged to use new technologies, including e-learning. E-learning refers to the use of computer-based electronic technologies of Internet, e-mail, websites and CD-ROMs, and their applications, to deliver, facilitate and enhance both formal and informal learning and knowledge sharing at any time, any place and at any pace.

1.1 Maximize responsiveness, effectiveness and reliability

RESPONSIVENESS

We promptly deliver innovative, results-oriented training in response to identified capacity development needs of beneficiaries.

- Implement training activities that respond to international agendas such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration
- Develop a proposal to enhance United Nations entities' collaboration for training and research on knowledge systems

EFFECTIVENESS

Our training and our research capacity on knowledge systems enable us to deliver cost-effective training activities that produce the desired results.

- Use research on knowledge systems to support quality-controlled training activities
- Promote training and capacity development by using the most appropriate means and methods, including Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)-based products, networks and applications

RELIABILITY

Our clients trust our ability to provide training activities that are in the forefront of capacity development.

- Ensure a client-centred approach that applies adult learning principles such as peer-to-peer review, learning by doing, participatory approach, skills building and critical thinking

1.2 Optimize communication with beneficiaries, partners and donors

IDENTITY

Our identity is built on common values.

- Consolidate and internalize one common institutional identity
- Further develop a positive and constructive atmosphere, which would include holding informal events

IMAGE

Our identity is conveyed through a consolidated and enhanced image, which improves the perception of the uniqueness of our institution.

- Harmonize use of UNITAR logo
- Harmonize presentation of publications, letterhead, and templates for administrative and legal documents
- Integrate current content of UNITAR web pages into a new and harmonized website

VISIBILITY

We ensure that our image and our competitive advantages are actively and effectively communicated to our beneficiaries, partners and donors.

- Invite renowned personalities to be “goodwill ambassadors” (correspondents) to promote UNITAR (see Terms and Conditions of the Appointment of Correspondents under provisional agenda item 9.d)
- Organize and participate in landmark events, such as a “World Training Day” initiative and a UNITAR-UNOG series of public conferences with top personalities
- Contribute to specialized publications, and create an award for the best publication relating to training for capacity development
- Use alumni networks to further increase our visibility

Strategic Priority 2

To Enhance Human Capital

One of our main strengths is the quality of our human capital. Investing in people is fundamental for UNITAR to deliver as one, excel in response to training needs, and innovate. Our human resources procedures ensure transparency and are consistently applied throughout our Institute.

2.1 Implement a human resource strategy

STABILITY

We ensure stability and continuity by optimizing skills and competencies, managing talents and valuing work done.

- Implement individual career development plans
- Support training of trainers and coaching

TRANSPARENCY

Our human resources management is based on professional criteria and transparent procedures.

- Apply consistent contractual treatment throughout UNITAR
- Ensure geographical diversity and gender balance
- Implement clearer policies in regard to Fellows’ nomenclature (see Terms and Conditions of the Appointment of Training or Research Assistants, Training or Research Advisors, Associate Fellows, Correspondents and Full-time Senior Fellows under agenda items 9.a, 9.b, 9.c, 9.d, 9.e)

2.2 Assess and strengthen existing competencies and individual skills

QUALITY

We build on the quality of people. We contribute to maximum potential by using and sharing individual skills and competencies. We identify strengths and areas for further improvement. We seize opportunities to acquire new skills and competencies.

- Identify, evaluate and optimize individual skills and competencies
- Allocate resources to encourage participation in professional development training activities organized within and outside the United Nations system
- Encourage job rotations and secondments

PERFORMANCE

We use individual performance standards that are coherent with our strategic priorities, consistent with those used in the United Nations system, and we systematize their implementation.

- Integrate performance standards in all job descriptions
- Ensure compliance with these standards through periodic and transparent monitoring
- Refine these standards as necessary

2.3 Improve our organizational culture based on our common values

ETHICS AND VALUES

Our commitment to the highest ethical standards should guide all of our actions and decisions. In the accomplishment of our work, we are accountable for the respect of the standards of efficiency, competence and integrity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity are our core values.

- Offer an induction programme to welcome new UNITAR colleagues, including an overall introduction to the United Nations system
- Organize discussion groups on ethics and values where people share their views

EXPERTISE

Our organizational culture promotes high performance and managerial excellence. We are responsive and results-oriented. We value creativity and innovation in training and research. We practice continuous learning and keep abreast of the latest developments.

- Build team spirit through brainstorming and information sharing exercises
- Empower people to initiate task groups to address UNITAR-wide issues

Human Capital Management Benchmarking Survey

In May 2007, UNITAR participated in a Human Capital Management Benchmarking Survey conducted by McBassi and Company in partnership with the United Nations System Staff College. More than 50 individuals working for UNITAR completed the questionnaire online. The survey's report, issued in June 2007, compares UNITAR to other UN entities and to "best practices" organizations in the McBassi database. With the exception of the indicator on leadership practices, in the four other human capital categories identified by the survey, namely workforce optimization, knowledge accessibility, learning capacity and employee engagement, UNITAR scored below the UN average. And for all indicators, both UNITAR (at 2.9) and the UN (average of 3 on a scale of 5) were lower than the "best practices" average of 4.3. The low scores reflect the need for UNITAR to improve its human resources, to encourage learning, innovation and synergy, and to implement processes and a strategy for continuous improvement in the management of human capital.

Strategic Priority 3

To Build and Strengthen Strategic Partnerships

Partnerships are key to the further development, continual improvement and constant innovation of all our activities towards 2009. Strategic partnerships can improve synergies with partners and contribute to an overall increase in institutional capacity. A resource mobilization strategy with ambitious targets will be developed, based on existing expertise, approaches and partnerships.

3.1 Build and strengthen partnerships with affiliates and networks

OUTREACH

Our partnerships will expand access to all beneficiaries with a view to making our services and products universally accessible and available.

- Utilize and expand the network of qualified training providers
- Prepare a database of existing partners and alumni
- Accredite UNITAR affiliates (e.g. CICAL Centres) and networks

3.2 Build and strengthen partnerships with academic and other institutions to ensure quality control in training and research activities

CONFIDENCE

Our services and products will be recognized as unique, cutting edge and first-rate through the use of harmonized accreditation, monitoring and evaluation systems.

- Review and develop a strategy on partnership development, taking into account international trends
- Standardize the procedures for UNITAR certification
- Establish arrangements with academic institutions and high-profile organizations for accreditation of UNITAR services and products
- Obtain “credit recommendation” for UNITAR courses via a network of partner institutions

3.3 Build and strengthen partnerships with relevant partners

ACCOUNTABILITY

We aim to increase the extent of our training and other services for our beneficiaries. Our ultimate goal is to ensure long-term stability and sustainability.

- Develop a resource mobilization strategy with ambitious targets, based on a review of existing practices
- Develop the argument for United Nations Regular Budget subsidies for services rendered by UNITAR (see Recommendations to the Board of Trustees in response to the 2006 Report of the Board of Auditors under item 6 of the provisional agenda)
- Enhance capacity for identification of strategic funding opportunities and develop a system of internal focal points
- Obtain new and additional sources of funding through fees for accredited services and products, additional voluntary contributions and access to multilateral funds

Strategic Priority 4

To Rationalize Organizational Structure

Our new organizational structure has to respond to the challenges and requirements identified during the UNITAR-wide consultation process. This new structure will enable us to grow as a knowledge organization able to develop contents as well as manage a significant network of qualified training providers. This structure will reflect UNITAR research capacity on knowledge systems in addition to the methodology work done in connection with its training activities.

4.1 Design and implement new functional and thematic clusters and central support functions

CONSISTENCY

Our processes are standardized throughout the organization with respect to all the functions of the Institute. They are coherent, accessible, transparent and responsive, and use technology as required.

- Use ICT to increase efficiency by further developing a Content Management System (CMS), including website, intranet and databases

RATIONALITY

Our organizational structure is optimized to carry out the functions of the Institute in support of the overall mandate of the United Nations. The structure is well-defined, responsive, rational and efficient. The components of the structure have specific but complementary tasks and support one another.

- The **Office of the Executive Director** will be light and efficient. Its main responsibility is overall strategy and direction.
- A **Training Department** (headed by a Director for Training) regroups the bulk of UNITAR operational activities and inherits current functional capacity and training methodologies. It is organized around thematic clusters based on the rationalization of the existing programmes. It includes a Senior Coordination Committee chaired by the Director for Training (the Director for Support Services and the Director for Research are *ex-officio* members).

Among other things, the department is in charge of:

- Developing training contents
- Organizing and delivering training
- Managing coordination with affiliates (e.g. CIFAL Centres) and accredited networks of training providers
- Establishing rules and standards for future affiliations

- A **Research Department** (headed by a Director for Research) adds a new focus to the work of UNITAR by developing research activities on knowledge systems conducive to delivering better training. It will also perform functions of monitoring and evaluation useful to the Training Department and affiliates. The department may host research initiatives temporarily associated with UNITAR and builds partnerships to participate in research on knowledge outside the Institute.

Among other things, it is responsible for:

- Research on knowledge systems and knowledge management
- Research on new technologies and training tools
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Capacity development
- E-learning methodology

- A **Support Services Department** (headed by a Director of Support Services) regroups UNITAR common services to support the core activities of UNITAR world-wide. The New York and Hiroshima Offices are included in this department. They support UNITAR activities in their respective regions where they may carry out training and research activities in connection and coordination with the Departments of Training and Research. Additional regional offices may be established in the future.

The functions of this department include:

- Strategic Partnerships and Communication (including donor relations)
- Administration & Finance
- Human Resources
- IT

- **Task Groups** and **ad-hoc Working Groups** are formed to identify, discuss or solve specific issues emerging from the work of the Institute. These groups can be initiated within departments or as a means to synergize between or among departments. They can be time-bound or work by objectives, depending on the nature of the issue under discussion.

STRUCTURE

