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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 high-quality learning solutions and related knowledge products and services to enhance decision-making and to support country-level action for overcoming global, national and local challenges. The Institute also engages in training-related research and advisory services to support Governments, the United Nations and other partners in the achievement of broader social and economic outcomes. In 2023, the Institute is marking its sixtieth anniversary since its establishment and the twentieth anniversary of the emergency mapping service, which has long been recognized by the humanitarian community as a reliable and efficient source of technical support at times of great and urgent need.

Under its strategic framework, 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 from implementing the strategic framework are highly encouraging, with the Institute having provided learning, training and related knowledge-sharing services to nearly 700,000 individuals during the 2020–2021 programme budget cycle. The number of learning-related beneficiaries was also the highest ever, reaching some 450,000 participants, or some 64 per cent of all beneficiaries. Given the cross-cutting nature of training, the contribution of UNITAR to helping Member States implement the 2030 Agenda spans many of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In accordance with the 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, UNITAR continues to focus attention on developing the capacities of the 93 countries in special situations. In terms of geographical regions, Africa, which comprises the largest number of distressed countries, continues to account for most of the Institute's learners. Gender issues feature prominently in the priorities of the strategic framework and, as of 2020 and continuing throughout

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2022, UNITAR has significantly improved its outreach to female beneficiaries and reversed the male-female gender imbalances from previous years.

The Institute's financial situation continues to be one of stability and growth. Total income for the biennium 2020–2021 was \$75.4 million, representing a 16.9 per cent increase over 2018–2019 figure of \$64.5 million. Operating as a loosely earmarked instrument, the Leave No One Behind Fund continues to provide support for programming in strategic areas that contribute to helping Member States achieve the Goals, in particular with respect to beneficiaries located in the most distressed countries.

It is recommended that UNITAR continue to ensure the alignment of its programming with the 2030 Agenda and to grow its programming and beneficiary outreach. In addition, UNITAR should explore ways and means of strengthening its engagement at the country level through enhanced linkages with the United Nations system with a view ensuring more integrated and impactful programming.

It is also recommended that Member States and other stakeholders, including the business and private sectors, provide their full support to enable the Institute to continue efforts to meet national capacity-building, learning and other needs, and that Member States and other stakeholders, including relevant United Nations entities, consider providing financial support to the Leave No One Behind Fund to enable increased outreach to beneficiaries from countries in special situations.

## I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a dedicated training arm of the United Nations. The Institute engages in training-related research and advisory services to support Governments, the United Nations and other partners in the achievement of broader social and economic outcomes. UNITAR also works to support expanded universal health coverage to combat non-communicable diseases and reduce inequality in accessing emergency and essential surgical care through training and related activities.

2. Under its 2022–2025 strategic framework, the UNITAR programme of work continues to be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other outcomes of other major conferences, including of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, in 2015; the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris in 2015; and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in 2015. 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”.

3. Section II of the present report, serves to cover the broader planning cycle of UNITAR and provides an overview of the Institute’s workstreams under the four pillars of the strategic framework, peace, people, planet and prosperity, and its cross-cutting programme pillars. The section also contains a brief summary of key results from the past biennium and highlights various initiatives undertaken since the 2021 report (E/2021/49), including areas referred to in Economic and Social Council resolution 2021/16, such as training programming in diplomacy, economic cooperation, mainstreaming a gender perspective and women’s empowerment and in the use of geospatial technologies in the field of disaster risk reduction.

4. Section III provides information on the financial situation of the Institute, which is characterized by stability and growth. Section IV contains two recommendations.

## II. Implementing the strategic framework

5. During the 2020–2021 biennium, UNITAR reached close to 700,000 beneficiaries from nearly all Member States, with some 450,000 individuals (or 64 per cent) benefitting from learning-related activities, representing the largest outreach for any two-year budget cycle in the Institute’s history. In addition to training, UNITAR also provided other products and services, the most noteworthy being the rapid mapping imagery and analysis undertaken by the United Nations Satellite Centre, the operational, technology-intensive programme of the Institute focused on satellite and geographic information system mapping and analysis. During 2020–2021, 642 satellite imagery-derived maps and reports were produced to support the international humanitarian community, twice as many as during the 2018–2019 biennium. Moreover, over 300 backstopping requests were fulfilled.

6. In its resolution 2021/16, 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. In November 2021, the Institute’s Board of Trustees recognized the continued relevance of the strategic objectives and agreed to extend the strategic framework to cover the period from 2022 to 2025, and to incorporate therein new sub-objectives on promoting health

for all, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, on promoting technologies for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and on reducing the many divides of the digital space. At the end of 2021, UNITAR also finalized the integration of the Sustainable Cycles Programme of the United Nations University, where it had been previously managed.

7. The steady growth witnessed during the 2020–2021 biennium accelerated in 2022, with overall beneficiary outreach reaching some 400,000 individuals, representing an increase of 7 per cent from the 2021 figures, and was the result of a record number of 1,383 events. Ninety-five per cent of beneficiaries from 2022 were associated with programming under the peace, people and planet pillars. The number of learning-related beneficiaries was also the highest ever, with more than 277,000 participants (70 per cent of all beneficiaries).

8. Approximately three quarters of the Institute’s learners come from developing countries. In accordance with the principle in the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind, UNITAR continues to focus attention on developing knowledge, skills and other capacities from the 93 countries in special situations, including fragile States and those emerging from conflict, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The success of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda is ultimately measured against the progress of distressed countries, and the Institute’s outreach to beneficiaries in these countries continues to increase in absolute terms.

9. Gender issues feature prominently in the strategic framework, with the objective to achieve gender parity of beneficiaries (without counting the military or police contingents in peacekeeping-related programming) in line with the United Nations system-wide strategy on gender parity. In 2022, UNITAR continued to improve its outreach to female beneficiaries, with a female to male ratio of 55 to 43 (1 per cent recorded as non-binary, and 1 per cent with unrecorded genders). UNITAR continues to target vulnerable groups in programming, with 79 per cent of the result areas of the revised 2022–2023 programme budget aligned with the principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women and of leaving no one behind.

## **A. Peace**

10. Building a sustainable future lies at the core of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which posits the interlinked nature of sustainable development and the strengthening of peace. To achieve this crucial objective, UNITAR continued to develop its capacity-building services to support the establishment of peaceful, just and inclusive societies through innovative learning solutions for individuals, organizations and institutions to enhance global decision-making and support country-level action aimed at shaping a better future. Despite the challenges related to the persistent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and the wars and conflicts occurring in 2022, UNITAR remained determined and committed to implementing innovative learning solutions for sustainable peace. The year 2022 also saw the strategic expansion of UNITAR, with some activities consolidated through the Institute’s presence in Mali, the Niger and Senegal and its project offices in Bonn, Germany, and Nairobi.

11. Given the critical importance of prevention and the primacy of political solutions, the Institute continued its dedicated work to strengthen the capacities of key actors and institutions in the prevention of conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace. In 2021 and 2022, fellowship programmes at the international, regional and subregional levels in Africa strengthened the capacities of senior and mid-level female and male diplomats, staff at United Nations Headquarters, peace

operations and regional organizations, and representatives of civil society, offering them opportunities to deepen their knowledge and strengthen their skills in peacemaking and conflict prevention.

12. In a similar way, the annual Fellowship Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy offered multiple stakeholders, including senior and mid-level professional staff of substantive departments at United Nations Headquarters, peace operations, United Nations system entities, and regional and subregional organizations, as well as diplomats, a platform for discussing topics related to peace and security. In 2021 and 2022, women represented 44 per cent and 48 per cent of the fellows trained, respectively. Fellows engaged in the theory and practice of conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation, sharing lessons learned and dialogue sessions with experts.

13. The world is facing turbulent times, with the social fabric of societies strained by the pandemic and its effects, and climate change and economic uncertainties contributing to political unrest and fragility, in particular in Africa. Threats to human security have become increasingly complex and require more urgent action. Peacemaking efforts to create and sustain more peaceful, just and inclusive societies and the prevention of violent conflict are key priorities for the diplomatic community and staff of the African Union and regional economic communities, and at United Nations peace operations across the continent. The annual regional training programme to enhance conflict prevention and peacemaking in Africa was designed to enhance the knowledge and practical skills of officials at the offices of the President and prime ministers, ministries of foreign affairs, heads of key African Union departments and Secretaries-General of subregional organizations, as well as heads of United Nations peace operations throughout Africa, in conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation to strengthen vital capacities in preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

14. In 2022, 51 per cent of the 43 diplomats and staff of the African Union and regional economic communities and peace operations who completed the advanced regional training programme were women, and included representatives from the offices of the President and prime ministers, United Nations and African Union peace operations in challenging contexts, and civil society. Participating officials returned to their crucial work equipped with training in best practices, with enhanced capacities and a strengthened vision for peace.

15. UNITAR, in partnership with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the International Organization of la Francophonie, designed and conducted a francophone subregional training programme to enhance conflict prevention and peacemaking in Central Africa in light of the complex challenges exacerbated by climate change and global political and economic uncertainties impacting the Central Africa region. Officials and representatives from Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Congo successfully completed the intensive training programme strengthening key capacities in peacemaking and conflict prevention. Female civil servants and representatives accounted for 59 per cent of those trained.

16. UNITAR continued its efforts to support the improved performance of uniformed personnel deployed to United Nations peace operations (military, police and corrections). Recognizing that modern peacekeeping comes with extraordinary personal risks to those who serve the cause of peace, UNITAR placed attention on the preparation of medical and paramedical personnel prior to their deployment to United Nations peace operations through the provision of training and equipment. Despite the multitude of challenges, the initiative made a tangible difference in the abilities of personnel to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and thus helped preserve the lives

of those dedicated to protecting peace and of the members of communities affected by protracted conflicts. In all its interventions, UNITAR strove to ensure that women had equal opportunities, to promote gender balance in security and defence forces and to eliminate barriers that prevent women from fully participating in efforts to re-establish or establish peaceful, just and inclusive societies across the world.

17. In 2022, UNITAR formalized partnerships with several regional and international peacekeeping training centres, with the aim of working towards further professionalization of training in the peace and security fields. In doing so, UNITAR promoted an approach based on interventions to support institutions and individuals in overcoming challenges and in creating an impact in the world.

18. In the area of women's empowerment, UNITAR expanded its portfolio of activities to enable women to meaningfully take part in peace processes at all levels and in all capacities. At the country level, UNITAR provided dedicated support to monitoring the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and related national action plans through direct support from the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security. In partnership with the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa), UNITAR helped in a similar way to upgrade the skills of the Network's members in conflict prevention and mediation interventions at various levels. The training, which benefitted 188 of the Network's members was delivered in English and French, with Arabic available through translation.

19. To address the gap in the representation of women at all levels of peace processes, the UNITAR Women's Leadership for Peace programme collaborated with the Senior Women Talent Pipeline and the Rwanda Peace Academy to offer Pipeline members an opportunity to apply key United Nations leadership principles to real-world challenges and gain a better understanding of how the United Nations approaches leadership in peacekeeping and post-conflict settings. To elevate the voices of emerging young women, UNITAR broke ground on gender equality and sports with the Premier League Charitable Fund and Sport Relief to support girls and young women in developing their personal skills and positive attitudes for leadership, and launched the #SheLeads4Peace Summer School for young women seeking to enter the peace and security field.

20. UNITAR continued to support the empowerment of young people and their entrepreneurship, as well as youth-led peace efforts, through a variety of initiatives. Its transformative approaches for youth-led and youth-focused capacity-building continued to be effective, such as in Colombia, where a now self-sustaining network of civil society organizations and trainers has benefitted 1,880 participants in support of the ongoing peace and reconciliation process, even after the end of the UNITAR-supported programme. In utilizing digital tools and methodologies as another means of needs-based delivery, UNITAR has helped to harness capacities and expand knowledge through online support on conflict analysis, transformation and resolution, including by directed efforts requested by a Yemeni young people, peace and security pact. The Institute created activities to make empowerment opportunities more inclusive and accessible, including by strengthening efforts through the Educate All initiative and launching a course in all six official languages of the United Nations, as well as Portuguese. The activities were designed to help young people contribute meaningfully to their communities' pressing economic, social and environmental needs by exploring their potential to become change-makers in the context of implementing the Goals.

21. In the area of recovery and resilience, UNITAR supported stabilization and reconciliation in Libya through different initiatives aimed at enabling civil society organizations to translate and concretize national efforts towards sustainable peace at

the community level. The initiatives focused on building local capacities for conflict analysis and peaceful coexistence, preventing violent extremism and empowering young people to become leaders of peaceful change. UNITAR also conducted an assessment on the role of women in conflict resolution and reconciliation at the national and local levels to contribute knowledge on the needs, capacities and challenges women face in participating in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Through its support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiative towards national reconciliation, UNITAR contributed to the stabilization of the country by building the capacities of a Libyan network of mediators.

22. In partnership with the World Bank, UNITAR continued to support the African Union in intersecting areas of conflict prevention and response – in particular, early warning systems and activities related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in priority contexts. In 2022, the UNITAR contribution was focused on the dissemination of the African Union operational guidance notes on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, in particular with regard to weapons and ammunition management; and countering violent extremism. In partnership with the Department of Peace Operations, UNITAR launched an online training programme for practitioners with advanced operational and/or policy experience in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. To provide practitioners working on gender equality and small arms control with tools to systematically integrate gender perspectives into initiatives on small arms control, UNITAR and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs collaborated to develop an online course based on the training manual on gender mainstreaming developed by the Office.

23. In the area of energy for peace, UNITAR continued to lead the Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement – a global initiative to promote actions that enable sustainable energy access and use in displacement settings, as laid out in the Global Plan of Action Framework. As part of the initiative, the Coordination Unit of the Global Plan of action worked in Nigeria with the energy team of the Germany Agency for International Cooperation to conduct energy assessments and develop business models allowing the transition to solar solutions at 40 premises occupied by various United Nations entities. The report on the work undertaken included key lessons learned from the use of different blended finance mechanisms in displacement settings and contained recommendations for their continued development. The potential benefits of employing finance mechanisms, such as direct funding, technical assistance, risk-transfer mechanisms and market initiatives, was highlighted. The interim findings led to the creation of the decarbonizing humanitarian energy multi-partner trust fund, which is aimed at supporting the decarbonization of humanitarian operations in five countries of the Sahel.

24. As the number of initiatives on energy access for displaced and host communities increases, so does the quantity of e-waste in displacement settings, where the lack of proper e-waste management practices poses health and environmental hazards. The Coordination Unit produced a landscaping report, in which it identified several e-waste management tools for humanitarian organizations based on circular economy principles, listed an overview of key actors and ongoing project, and provided recommendations for the decision makers. The Coordination Unit established a task force dedicated to sharing lessons learned with regard to e-waste projects, raising awareness about e-waste at the decision-making level, supporting the implementation of e-waste pilot projects and organizing webinars to disseminate findings.

25. Good governance and the rule of law are the foundation of every healthy democracy, helping to ensure that democratic institutions are perceived as legitimate by citizens. UNITAR is currently exploring opportunities to expand its support to the

Niger and other neighbouring countries in West Africa in the framework of its efforts to promote the rule of law, just and equitable societies and the effective fight against corruption and impunity as preconditions for sustainable development.

## **B. People**

26. Under the strategic framework's people pillar, UNITAR continues to focus on promoting well-being and quality of life, including through the protection and empowerment of groups that have been marginalized and made vulnerable. Its wide portfolio of projects that are focused on increasing the quality of life of people and local communities is implemented largely by the International Training Centres for Authorities and Leaders Global Network, which currently comprises 30 affiliated centres across Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and the Americas. Covering a wide range of thematic areas related to sustainability, governance, urban development, economic development and social inclusion, environmental issues and the 2030 Agenda, the network contributes to 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 of sustainable development. The network continued to expand its activities, reaching a total of 174,208 beneficiaries in 2021 and 2022.

27. Another significant initiative under the people pillar involves helping Member States to implement actions that reduce the number of traffic crashes and related fatalities and injuries. The work of UNITAR in this area is focused on strengthening the capacity of government officials to implement solutions that reduce risk factors associated with road-traffic crashes, conduct road assessments to identify high-risk roads and design targeted interventions. Over 12,000 beneficiaries in 28 countries were reached in 2021 and 2022 through face-to-face training workshops, online courses and public awareness programmes.

28. In a global context affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to support entrepreneurs to build life skills and identify creative solutions not only to keep their activities afloat due to different challenges, but also to expand their businesses. UNITAR, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) joined efforts to offer training to policymakers on supporting migrants, refugees and local entrepreneurs. In 2022, 1,505 beneficiaries, mainly from governments at the national and local levels, completed the courses and reported having a better understanding of policy tools and provisions for migrant and refugee entrepreneurship.

29. In an effort to contribute to advancing infant health and well-being, in 2022 UNITAR launched the Breastfeeding Education Initiative, which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of health workers to provide skilled counselling to help women to gain practical knowledge about breastfeeding and increase their confidence in that regard. A set of educational tools have been developed to train health workers, nurses, midwives and parents, with a special emphasis on serving stakeholders in sub-Saharan Africa.

30. UNITAR continued its strong collaboration in the global surgery and health sectors with multiple institutions, such as the Harvard School of Public Health and Johns Hopkins Medical School. An executive course was conducted on high-value surgical systems, receiving the highest-ever participant feedback rating achieved by any of Harvard's Executive Continuing Professional Education programmes. Specialized technical support for national surgical planning continued in Ecuador, Nepal and Pakistan, including the publication in 2022 of a Spanish version of the



National Surgical, Obstetric Anaesthesia Planning Manual. New initiatives were started with the Ministries of Health of Argentina and Malaysia on policy development with blood plasma-derived therapies, while the work of the UNITAR Division for People and Social Inclusion on value-based health care continued to grow in collaboration with partners in Rwanda, South Africa and Türkiye. Multiple educational interventions, courses, events and webinars that were focused on highly specialized areas of health expertise reached more than 1,400 beneficiaries. The work of UNITAR to assist ministries of health in increasing access to surgical care systems, in particular with a focus on the training of the surgical system workforce, has greatly benefitted from the partnership with the Global Surgery Foundation.

31. UNITAR continued its collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and its Global Education and Training Institute to offer dedicated training to local government officials to support the development of local disaster risk reduction and resilience strategies. To contribute to strengthening the capacity of local government officials in risk reduction and resilience planning, including health-threats management, UNITAR, the Office and the Institute and joined forces with the World Health Organization (WHO) to provide online training to local government officials on how to implement a holistic approach that integrates public health systems and disaster risk management, with 772 beneficiaries from local governments completing courses in 2022.

32. In partnership with the Digital Government Unit of UNCTAD, and in coordination with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UNITAR has jointly built digital government-services platforms in Arab countries. The objective of the ongoing partnership is to maximize the effectiveness, development impact and contribution to the 2030 Agenda of digital government. The partnership also promotes the development and delivery of training courses for government officials and other stakeholders in order to enhance the implementation and spread of the digital services platforms. In 2022, UNITAR launched a joint online business registration platform in Jordan within the framework of the Jordanian e-government programme Daleel. UNITAR and UNCTAD have so far helped 293 companies in that country register as employers, thereby recognizing jobs that were not traditionally incorporated in the Jordanian economy.

### **C. Planet**

33. Under the strategic framework's planet pillar, UNITAR worked 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 sound and sustainable management of chemicals and waste and undertaking research to support policies for circular economy. In the area of climate action, the Institute continued to provide the 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. Launched in 2009, the Partnership currently includes 36 multilateral organizations and is active in more than 30 countries.

34. The One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership promotes global climate literacy and engagement. Its e-learning platform is a well-recognized global climate change learning portal. Education is crucial to addressing the existential threat of climate change, and the relevance of the Partnership in this regard is attested by the more than 640,000 users worldwide registered on the platform, and the over 200,000 certificates issued as of December 2022. The platform now offers approximately 50 courses linked to climate change and the green economy transition,

available in several languages and free of charge. A new climate change quiz on the platform allows users to test their knowledge and receive specific recommendations for additional learning. Other learning opportunities, such as e-workshops and climate classrooms, are also provided to more specific audiences on different climate-related topics.

35. At the national level, the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership assists countries in advancing climate change learning to support the implementation of their nationally determined contributions and other climate change commitments. Building on previous collaborations, the Partnership has consulted partner countries on their latest priority needs in the area of climate change education, training and public awareness and has already managed to mobilize additional resources and support for three of them, in alignment with other major international initiatives. Further opportunities are being explored, including to support the development of a national climate change learning strategy in a new partner country and to expand the programme's regional work in West Africa. The Partnership is also increasingly supporting the capacity and engagement of young people in climate change. Dedicated learning and exchange opportunities continue to be made available.

36. UNITAR continued its active engagement with the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, a prominent alliance comprising 4 other United Nations entities (United Nations Environment Programme, International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Industrial Development Organization), 8 funding partners and 22 partner countries that work together to transform economies into drivers of sustainability. The contribution of UNITAR to the Partnership for Action on Green Economy is focused on capacity development for individuals and training institutions, including global learning products, customized training for partner countries, support for identifying green economy learning priorities and strategy development, and knowledge-sharing.

37. In support of United Nations Reform, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy is working with resident coordinators worldwide to deliver tailored support to countries and leverage the United Nations system for green economic transformation. In this context, UNITAR is leading on targeted trainings on macroeconomic modelling for key national stakeholders working closely with the Development Coordinator Office and resident coordinator system.

38. UNITAR, co-leading with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Economic Commission for Europe, has proposed to the International Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers Coordinating Group the creation of a global partnership to take concrete actions towards the implementation of pollutant release and transfer registers worldwide. The proposal has been welcomed by the Coordinating Group and the first meeting of the partnership will take place in the second quarter of 2023.

39. UNITAR, in close cooperation with the Swedish Chemicals Agency and the Federal Office for the Environment of Switzerland, has launched five new free-of-charge online courses related to chemical and waste management. In close cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme, UNITAR has developed guidance for the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf entitled *The GCC Unified Guidelines for Hazardous Chemicals Management*. The guidance is to be used by all Cooperation Council countries to help them develop their national legislation and regulatory framework for chemicals and waste management.

40. Based at the UNITAR office in Bonn, the Sustainable Cycles Programme leads a series of innovative research and training programmes focusing on solutions for the sustainable production, consumption and disposal of ubiquitous goods. In 2022, the Programme published a regional e-waste monitor for Latin America. The monitor

illustrated research results for the 13 countries participating in a joint project of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the Global Environment Fund on strengthening national initiatives and enhancing regional cooperation for the environmentally sound management of persistent organic pollutants in the waste of electronic or electrical equipment in Latin American countries. The monitor provides an assessment of statistics, legislation and management infrastructure of e-waste and persistent organic pollutants in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The Programme also issued the first publication on the subject, entitled *Global Transboundary E-waste Flows Monitor 2022*, illustrating facts on the quantities and trade routes that have not yet been researched at a global level. It also published the first National E-waste Monitor for Lebanon, which serves to examine the overall statistics of electronic and electrical equipment placed on the market, the national stock and its subsequent e-waste generation, its disposal routes and an e-waste collection for environmentally sound management. In September 2022, young scientists from across the world and 10 international experts gathered at the University of Limerick, Ireland, for 10 days to discuss managing valuable and hazardous materials in e-waste and the related circular economy scenarios. In addition, two UNITAR programmes jointly developed a self-paced online e-waste training that is attracting growing attention worldwide. The Sustainable Cycles Programme also hosts the Solving the E-Waste Problem initiative, which is a global network of more than 55 organizations committed to developing recommendations to tackle the growing problem of e-waste.

#### **D. Prosperity**

41. Under the strategic framework's prosperity pillar, UNITAR worked to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create decent work opportunities for all by strengthening employability capacities, including entrepreneurship and digital upskilling and reskilling, developing skills for multi-stakeholder collaboration, and enhancing knowledge on trade, public finance, intellectual property and combatting financial crimes. Over the past two years, UNITAR has developed and implemented several national, regional and global training activities in partnership with other United Nations organizations and regional economic communities, multilateral development banks and regional training institutions.

42. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact economic and financial systems globally, with the ongoing climate change and geopolitical dynamics further exacerbating inequality in developing and least developed countries. The Institute's Great Ideas Space initiative has adapted to these changes and continued with its aim of providing innovative learning solutions to vulnerable and marginalized communities of women and young people, across countries either in conflict or recovering from conflict. Under the initiative, training has been provided to 4,900 young people and women in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Kenya and Lebanon, with the aim to mobilize resilient entrepreneurs who are empowered with global as much as regional contextualized knowledge on addressing food insecurity and public health.

43. The Leadership and Diversity initiative is focused on creating inclusive, resilient communities across local, regional and national levels by training women and young people across civil, informal, professional and public sectors in least developed countries and small island developing States. Building a resilient society is becoming increasingly imperative with the various climate-led disasters affecting countries globally. The programmes on disaster risk reduction enable participants to design locally relevant solutions while integrating lessons from neighbouring regions

along with global experiences that encourage them to develop sustainable and long-term solutions. To ensure that the programme is further inclusive, sign language was introduced in the programmes in 2022.

44. To address the issue of food insecurity at a policy level, the Institute developed programmes under the finance and trade initiative partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to provide comprehensive training on trade and food security to a global audience of policymakers in Arabic, French and Russian and, in 2022, for the first time, in Spanish, to 16 Latin American countries. In Africa, programmes have partnered with UNDP to provide training on financial inclusion and food security across four regional economic communities in Arabic, English and French.

45. Digital business platforms are growing, particularly in Africa, further intensifying the need to enhance the capacities of the local population. On the occasion of World Creativity and Innovation Day, the Institute launched a new digital finance initiative that is aimed at supporting countries and organizations to harness digital technologies and to develop the essential digital and financial knowledge and skills of local populations. The conference generated forward-looking and future-oriented discussions on the future of finance in the context of the latest financial technology innovations, best practices of digitalizing monetary policy and currencies from the regulatory perspective, and the potential of digital innovations in accelerating sustainable development.

46. Integrating digital technology into the learning experience has been integral in creating more engaging and accessible knowledge pathways for the Institute's participants; a high percentage of learners are located in countries with situations of conflict and violence. A microlearning approach, that is mobile-first and accessible offline has allowed for 6,713 participants, 5,970 of whom are women, to continue their learning journey despite electric or data-related challenges. Virtual reality has been another key contributor for participants to immerse themselves using an experiential learning lens and not being limited to a theoretical approach.

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

47. In addition to the thematic pillars of peace, people, planet and prosperity, UNITAR also worked in three cross-cutting areas: programming aimed to accelerate 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**

48. UNITAR continued its work on offering capacity-building, learning and training solutions in the area of sustainable development. In collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Institute has been supporting Mauritius and Seychelles on implementing a more integrated approach to national planning and the implementation of the Goals. In Cyprus, UNITAR has supported the development of a national Sustainable Development Goal action plan and the strengthening of a governance system for the Goals in order for the monitoring and reporting processes to help inform national policies and programmes, address Goal interlinkages, close possible gaps and promote collaboration across various ministries and with non-governmental stakeholders. Jointly with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNITAR delivered a regional programme for Arab countries to strengthen capacities for integrated planning and policy coherence. As part of a partnership with several United Nations entities, UNITAR contributed to the delivery of three regional

training programmes for the North and Central Asian region, Asia-Pacific region and African region with a focus on integrated national financing frameworks to help steer public and private resources in support of the Goals. A new e-learning course has been developed by UNITAR and UNDP specifically on aligning national budgeting with the implementation of the Goals.

49. The educational platform “UN SGD:Learn”, provided jointly to the secretariat by UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College is aimed at promoting a “One United Nations” approach to learning about the Goals and has grown to include 66 partners. The platform offers a one-stop shop of learning resources on the Goals from United Nations entities and many other partners with customized search functions, as well as a new self-assessment tool allowing learners to test themselves on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s cross-cutting Goal competencies. The platform’s community pages also offer opportunities for different entities and networks, such as the Statistics Division, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and the United Nations Evaluation Group to manage learning opportunities. A new business task force led by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization has been established to improve access to training for business communities in support of Goal 4. The platform reached 211,691 learners as of 31 December 2022, and more than 1,000 individuals have already taken a self-assessment on the Goals.

50. The Institute continued to deliver capacity-building and learning services to enable national statistical offices to leverage new data partnerships, strengthen data governance and increase statistical literacy of policymakers and other audiences. UNITAR as part of a consortium composed of several European universities and the European Organization for Nuclear Research worked to promote the use of citizen science data by national statistical offices, both as input into official statistics and as complementary non-official data for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals. A policy brief has been prepared by UNITAR and several United Nations entities and other organizations, providing a series of recommendations for national statistical offices and featuring case studies on this topic. As an active member of the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training, UNITAR has been leading its task team on statistical literacy and – together with the Statistics Division and the Economic Commission for Africa – continued delivering a course for policymakers to address not only basic mathematical and statistical skills but also competencies related to assessing the data on fitness for purpose and ensuring effective and accurate communication and use of data for policy design, monitoring and evaluation. A 2021 United Nations World Data Forum event organized by UNITAR, the Statistics Division and the Global Network of Institutions for Statistical Training featured this course as well as other good practices from several countries. StaTact, an online collaborative tool for national statistics offices, has been rolled out to countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In addition, jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, UNITAR launched a new course on environment-related Sustainable Development Goals indicators, with 5,781 learners benefitting from data courses and workshops.

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

51. The United Nations Satellite Centre continued to support United Nations entities and Member States in accessing geospatial information solutions in emergency response and disaster risk management as well as in emerging applications such as election planning, health, education planning, monitoring of development projects and the protection of cultural heritage.

52. In 2022, the Centre's emergency mapping service was activated 72 times and produced 449 geospatial-derived products on 38 different countries. The year was marked in particular by the support provided in response to the conflict in Ukraine and the flood that hit Pakistan. Strategic partnerships were sustained and further developed with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre.

53. 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 and technology infrastructure. The partnership means that state-of-the-art computing power, data storage and data management as a service are available for the benefit of United Nations entities in the field of geospatial information.

54. Capacity development remains an essential workstream under the Centre's mandate. As such, in 2022, the Centre developed the geographical information system-related knowledge and skills of 601 participants, most of whom work in the government sector in least developed countries and small island developing States.

55. Among its diverse activities at the country level, the Centre has supported national stakeholders to strengthen climate change resilience and disaster risk reduction. The provision of trainings and technical solutions was scaled up from three Pacific small islands developing States to eight countries spanning Asia-Pacific and Africa thanks to financial support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

56. E-learning remains an important part of capacity development, whether it involves national or regional government stakeholders, or the general public interested in the uses of satellite imagery. In 2022, regional online courses were carried out for countries sharing the Volta River Basin and from the Indian Ocean Rim Association to improve flood and drought risk management, thereby reducing vulnerability to future natural hazards. The open and self-paced course provided by UNITAR on geospatial information technology in fragile contexts, which is offered in Arabic, English and French, has reached over 1,500 people since its launch in 2020.

57. The Centre continued to work towards innovation, adding to its portfolio different formats for presenting analysis, such as video animations, integrated web-mapping platforms and three-dimensional modelling. In the field of artificial intelligence, the Centre has implemented a pipeline for analysing satellite imagery using custom-developed artificial intelligence models with human correction of artificial intelligence results in order to assess the quality of the artificial intelligence output before any public release. The Centre's FloodAI solution has been deployed for seven emergencies in five countries. A joint e-learning course on the use of deep learning for flood detection was designed and rolled out with a multinational technology company, to upskill data scientists within disaster management agencies worldwide. The Centre has also been conducting research to expand its end-to-end pipeline to perform damage assessments in the context of conflicts and disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards using high-resolution satellite imagery.

58. In 2023, the Centre will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of its emergency mapping service, which has long been recognized by the humanitarian community as a reliable and efficient source of technical support at times of great and urgent need. As the number of requests received from United Nations entities and Member States continues to increase, the Centre will strive to further develop synergies and economies of scale for efficient use of geospatial information by United Nations entities.

## Multilateral diplomacy

59. Strengthening knowledge, skills and awareness of delegates to perform effectively in the United Nations arena continued to be an important and strategic dimension of UNITAR work. In addition to serving as the go-to hub of the United Nations on understanding the dynamics of the United Nations system, principle organs, processes and procedures for diplomats and other delegates at the country level and at the venues where the United Nations maintains a significant presence, UNITAR has launched four new hybrid Master's degree programmes in the following areas: anti-corruption and diplomacy, with the International Anti-Corruption Academy, Austria; international leadership and negotiation, with the Universidad Europea de Valencia, Spain; international law and diplomacy, with the University for Peace, Costa Rica; and global public diplomacy and sustainable development, with the Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli, Rome. The programmes are designed to offer first-hand experience and solid understanding of diplomacy, international law and the United Nations to students and professionals who wish to pursue a career in international affairs. The UNITAR Division for Multilateral Diplomacy now has 11 ongoing joint Master's degree programmes at eight universities on four continents.

60. At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNITAR broadened its online portfolio to offer online certificates and diplomas on essential professional skills, multilateral diplomacy and international law in the twenty-first century. UNITAR also implemented a series of online and hybrid training programmes that were aimed at fostering the spirit of international cooperation among participants and sensitize them to the fact that the global challenges of today require global cooperation. The Institute also leveraged its knowledge of online learning methodologies when cooperating with the International Organization for Migration to create customized training courses on international migration law. The Institute also partnered with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to implement a two-week summer programme on international normative frameworks, information and communications technology and artificial intelligence, that was open to participants from small island developing states and least developed countries.

61. UNITAR strengthened its partnerships with several Governments, including the China, Ghana, Kenya, Kuwait, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The customized training solutions were successfully delivered in person, hybrid and/or online, with over 90 per cent of participants rating the content of the training relevant to their jobs and agreeing they would use the information acquired in their work.

62. The Institute's office in New York has continued to provide delegates and staff of the United Nations and accredited non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations with learning opportunities, including courses introducing delegates to the work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council (for new members); elections to principle organs of the United Nations; lessons from the UNDP publication entitled *Special Report on Human Security*; and the structure, drafting and adoption of resolutions adopted by the principle organs and their subsidiary bodies. In cooperation with Columbia Law School, UNITAR continued a successful partnership for delegates with a series of trainings on mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution.

63. Jointly with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, the Institute implemented two fellowship programmes benefitting fellows from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and has coordinated two transitional workshops for the seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh Presidents of the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution [75/325](#).

64. The Office also conducted two trainings on the Goals during the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2021 and 2022, reaching 3,691 participants.

## **F. The Defeat Non-Communicable Diseases Partnership**

65. Under a hosted partnership arrangement at UNITAR, the Defeat Non-Communicable Diseases Partnership continued to provide technical assistance and support across its four workstreams, comprised of national capacity-building, community scale-up of services, essential supplies and sustainable financing. In addition to its ongoing work in Myanmar and Rwanda, the Partnership initiated new programming in Ecuador, the Gambia and India. In Rwanda, the implementation of the national non-communicable diseases strategy and costed action plan witnessed collaboration across sectors, and a similar process began in the Gambia with the launching of a national multi-sectoral strategy and a costed action plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases covering the period from 2022 to 2027 by the President of the country. In the Gambia and Rwanda, results from the implementation of non-communicable disease strategies and programmes have been encouraging, with 5,564 children screened across 21 schools in Rwanda for rheumatic heart disease, achieving 37 per cent of the strategy's target of 40 per cent. The treatment coverage rate for hypertension in Rwanda has also increased to 8.19 per cent in 2021, compared with 5.4 per cent in 2020. The Gambia has reported a 14.1 per cent increase in the number of patients with non-communicable diseases presenting in health facilities in 2021 over the number in 2020.

66. In practical furtherance of the WHO global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem, the three Indian state governments of Goa, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh requested, and are receiving, ongoing support for implementing cervical cancer screening and human papillomavirus vaccination programmes. In partnership with WHO, the Defeat Non-Communicable Diseases Partnership launched the first in a series of annual/biennial implementation research grants to recognize and showcase the work of young researchers on scaling-up proven cost-effective interventions on non-communicable disease prevention and control in low- and middle-income countries. The eight finalists were presented awards jointly with the Director-General of WHO during the World Health Summit held in Berlin on 16 October 2022.

67. In order to sustain the growth and future development of the Defeat Non-Communicable Diseases Partnership, its Executive Committee decided in 2022 to establish the Partnership as an independent organization headquartered in Geneva, with an international mandate and continued strong strategic and programmatic collaboration with UNITAR. Consequently, effective 1 January 2023, the Partnership has transitioned from its earlier hosted partnership arrangement to being a strategic institutional partner and donor to UNITAR. This arrangement has been institutionalized through an agreement for joint programming, resource mobilization, technical collaboration and support to and with the new division of UNITAR on non-communicable diseases, digital health and capacity-building.

## **III. Financial situation of the Institute**

68. The Institute's financial situation continues to be one of stability and growth. Total income for the biennium 2020–2021 was \$75.4 million, representing a 16.9 per cent increase over 2018–2019 figures of \$64.5 million.



69. The Institute continues to be heavily reliant on a small number of donors; the top 10 donors contributed approximately 74.8 per cent of the total donor contributions for the year 2021. UNITAR has concluded several multi-year agreements with partners, significantly increasing its balance of receivables.

70. Overall, UNITAR remains in sound financial health; its accumulated surpluses increased from \$30.831 million in 2020 to \$46.936 million in 2021, resulting from a reported surplus for the year of \$16.684 million offset by an actuarial loss on employee benefit liabilities of \$0.579 million. 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.

71. In November 2022, at its sixty-third session, the UNITAR Board of Trustees adopted the revised programme budget for 2022–2023 of \$83.311 million, representing a \$10.816-million increase over the initial 2022–2023 programme budget of \$72.495 million. The Leave No One Behind Fund (formerly the Strategic Framework Fund) enabled UNITAR to allocate funds to 68 projects since being established by the Board of Trustees in November 2018. While the flexible character of the fund has enabled UNITAR to channel resources where learning and related capacity development are most needed, mobilizing additional support to the fund has proved challenging, despite appeals to Member States and other stakeholders to make voluntary contributions.

72. The Institute received an unqualified opinion of its financial statements from the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2020 and 2021.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

73. It is recommended that UNITAR continue to ensure alignment of programming to the 2030 Agenda and, while continuing to grow in programming and beneficiary outreach, explore ways and means of strengthening engagement at the country level through enhanced linkages with the United Nations system with a view to ensuring more integrated and impactful programming.

74. It is also recommended that Member States and other stakeholders, including the business and private sectors, provide their full support to enable the Institute to continue efforts to meet national capacity-building, learning and other needs, and that Member States and other stakeholders, including relevant United Nations entities, consider providing financial support to the Leave No One Behind Fund to enable increased outreach to beneficiaries from countries in special situations.