

28 November 2013

Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of UNITAR - a G77/UNITAR event

**Statement by Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles, UN Assistant Secretary-General
Acting Head, Executive Director, UNITAR**

Thursday, 28 November 2013 at 17:00

Palais des Nations, Kazakh Room (Room XIV)

Distinguished Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria,

Distinguished Prime Minister of Jamaica,

Chair of the group of the G77 and China

Distinguished members of the Board of Trustees,

Former UNITAR Executive Director,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to represent UNITAR at this historic event today.

I am so pleased that you have been able to join us in this celebration, co-organized with the Chair of G77, our good friend Ambassador Carbo. We are particularly honored by the presence of our keynote speaker H. E. Mr. Abdelmalek Sellal, Prime Minister of Algeria, our UNITAR Board of Trustees members including The Most Honorable Ms. Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica and our esteemed former UNITAR executive Director, Mr. Marcel Boisard.

I regret that our Board of Trustees Chair, H.E. Ambassador Lopes has been asked by his President to preside over another important event in Paris, but I send you his apologies and his warm greetings.

As you have heard, in 1963, UN member states decided to establish UNITAR as part of their effort to ensure that the newly independent countries could make their voices heard in multilateral decision making, and to support their efforts to build the capacity they needed for their people to thrive and prosper.

50 years later, in our ever more globalized world, it is even more important that every member state feels that it has the opportunity to fully participate in shaping the global agenda as we look for shared solutions to the challenges facing the world today.

As we have heard, UNITAR has been able to provide important support to member states, both delegates to the UN, and at regional and country level, over the last 50 years, thanks to inspired and dedicated leadership like that of Mr. Boisard and more recently Mr. Lopes.

UNITAR has responded to the demand for training services over the years, and steadily expanded the numbers of people benefiting from our training activities, especially taking advantage of the opportunities offered by e-learning as we saw in the video, such that 45% of our training is now done virtually.

In 2012 UNITAR delivered 97 events in partnership UN bodies and other organizations, and provided training to participants from 184 countries through around 400 training events that year. In the 2012-2013 biennium, we estimate UNITAR will have reached out to over 50,000 people around the world, and I am pleased that, based on 2012 results, 60% of our training related beneficiaries are women.

As we now look forwards to the next 50 years, we have presented a new strategic programme to our UNITAR Board of Trustees today, which has been very positively received by them. It provides a vision of an organization that through its work enhances the relevance and effectiveness of the UN in the 21st Century. We will do this by continuing to enhance the capacity of government delegates to perform effectively through intergovernmental processes, and, building capacity of key change agents and institutions to translate global norms and policies into concrete action.

The strategies we will use include the delivery of training designed to address the needs of each group of beneficiaries; facilitating knowledge and experience sharing; conducting research on, and piloting, innovative learning techniques and methodologies; and, helping governments with relevant technology based knowledge services like Geo Spatial Imaging from our UNOSAT programme that has been so useful in the recent UN response in the Philippines.

The specific programme areas that will be our focus for the next four years cover all four UN pillars. For **Sustainable Development** we will include training related to trade, finance and investment, intellectual property rights and human mobility, as well as climate change, green growth, and youth employability.

For **Peace and Security**, we will have programmes on prevention and resolution of conflict, preparing for peacekeeping, and, post conflict recovery.

For **Humanitarian response**, we will continue our UNOSAT support to all UN system members, and further develop training in Disaster Risk Reduction.

And for **Human Rights**, we will continue our training for new members of the Human Rights Council, as well as providing training on international law, and main-streaming human rights and gender considerations through all of our training programmes.

The focus of our programmes may change over time, as the issues that member states need to focus on to address emerging challenges will also change. But our basic mandate will remain the same, supporting the intergovernmental decision making process, and, building the capacity to turn those decisions into action.

While member states gave UNITAR a vitally important mandate, they did not give UNITAR any predictable resources to carry out that mandate. UNITAR is 100% voluntary funded. Everything we do, including organizing an event like this, is funded by a donor. And we are truly grateful for the support we have been receiving from our donors, especially our host country, Switzerland.

Having no predictable source of income has one good effect; it really forces us to make every dollar go as far as possible, and to ensure that UNITAR courses are of the highest quality, responding to demand and giving excellent value for money.

Although the current global economic situation is still difficult for most countries, I am pleased to report a recent trend which bodes well for the future of UNITAR, where G77 member states like Algeria, Nigeria and Afghanistan are now funding significant UNITAR training programmes for their own nationals.

But today, we will hear about an even more encouraging development where a G77 country that has experienced economic growth is now in a position to make a very significant contribution to the training of other G77 countries that have been less fortunate. This is very exciting and encouraging and I

really hope that other countries will follow the wonderful example being set by Algeria.

Finally, let me end by thanking the Chair of G77, Amb. Carbo for offering to organize this event, and to co-sponsor a Framework of Cooperation between G77 and China in Geneva and UNITAR, reflecting the "special relationship" that UNITAR has had with G77 over the last 50 years and renewing the commitment on both sides to work closely together. As we look forward to the next 50 years, we know that with strategic and strong partnerships with our UN family friends, our traditional donors, funding partners like Algeria, and our ongoing partnership with G77, UNITAR will be able to provide even more and even better support to our member states, as we work together to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you,