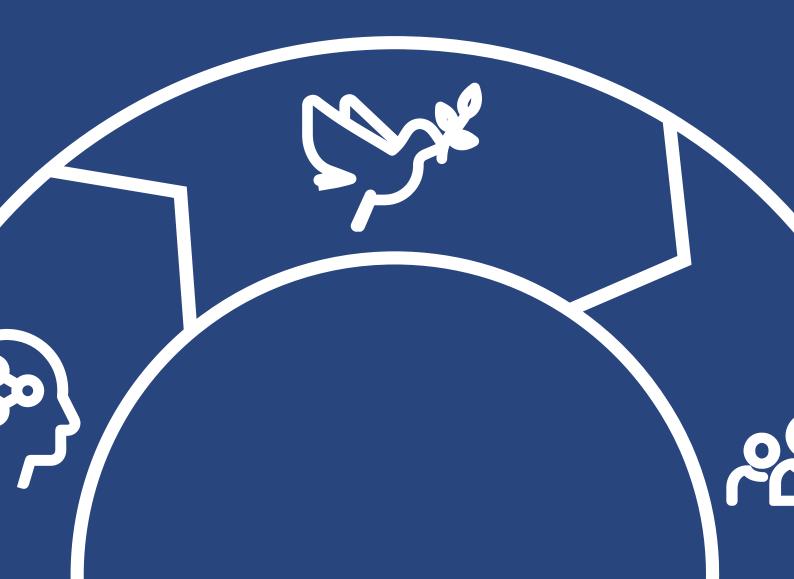
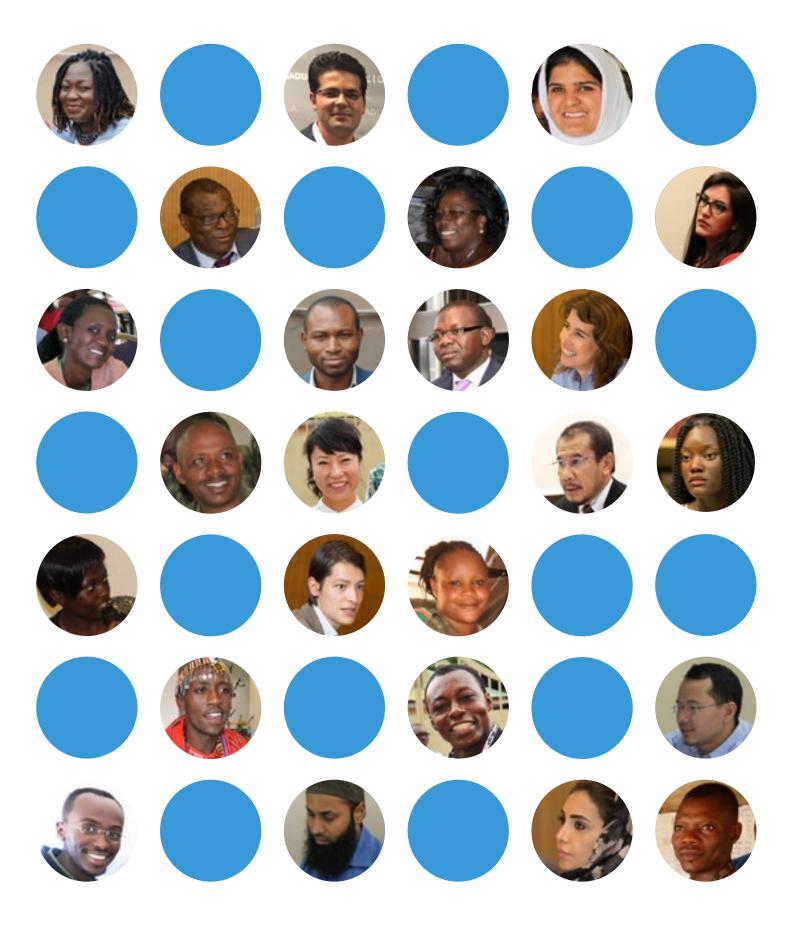


# Strategic Framework 2018-2021







Strategic Framework 2018-2021



# A Message from Leadership

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to guide the world in shaping a better future. The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action centered around people and their prosperity, for our planet and for peace and justice. 2015 also saw the birth of several other significant UN action plans and agenda, including those that were finalized in Sendai, Addis Ababa, Paris and New York. The 2030 Agenda is far-reaching, transformative and universal; and implementing it and the other outcomes 2015 will require efforts from all countries and all levels of government, as well as from an array of other stakeholders, including the UN and other international organizations, civil society, academia and the business community.

As countries embark on implementing the Agenda, learning will undeniably play an instrumental role, with knowledge, skills and attitudes being important drivers of change across all Goals. Indeed, developing the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions through training and related processes could hardly be more relevant to the transformational change that the 2030 Agenda and the other action plans agreed to in 2015 seek to bring about.

As a leading provider of high quality learning solutions and other knowledge products and services, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is deeply committed to helping Member States and other United Nations stakeholders implement the 2030 Agenda. Over the past 12 months, we have discussed among our talented and diverse pool of professionals and we have consulted externally with our key donors and implementing partners on how UNITAR can become best fit-for-purpose. The 2018-2021 strategic framework is the result of this participatory process of reflection and consultation, and we look forward to implementing the framework together with our partners and for the benefit of our stakeholders.



Nikhil Seth Executive Director



Taous Feroukhi Chair, Board of Trustees

### New Opportunities, New Challenges

- The establishment of UNITAR's new strategic framework provides an opportunity to take a critical and constructive look at where we are and where we want to be by 2021. It is a time to take meaningful steps to become fit for purpose to meet the learning and broader capacity development needs to help countries achieve the global development agenda. The 2018-2021 strategic framework outlines the direction that UNITAR will take and serves as the foundation for planning and budgeting, mobilizing resources, crafting partnerships, delivering results and measuring and evaluating our contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The work of UNITAR will be guided by the contemporary plans of action and platforms agreed to in the United Nations for our people, their prosperity, our planet and peace and justice. The major blueprints which will guide UNITAR's work are the 2030 Agenda; the other major outcomes from 2015, including those of the Sendai (Disaster Risk Reduction), Paris (Climate Change) and Addis Ababa (Financing for Development) conferences; and the ongoing work on UN development system reform.
- Challenges both old and new are inherent to any opportunity. While our contribution to capacity development is undeniably real, we are bound by organizational, financial and other pressures. For a small, autonomous and voluntarily-funded entity, these pressures can restrain UNITAR from achieving its full potential. Contributing meaningfully to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the other plans of action will require that we pursue more strategic, integrated, holistic and tailored approaches to delivering results that can effectively contribute to the transformations that the Agenda and other platforms call for.
- Our Institute has registered impressive growth in activities and outputs over the past several biennia. We have strengthened our focus on delivering learning solutions and on meeting the needs of participants from developing countries. Our financing has also increased, from close to \$42 million in 2010-2011 to some \$50 million projected for 2016-2017.
- Despite this optimistic picture, our Institute finds itself like many organizations at a crossroads. Achieving promising, large-scale evidence-based outcomes is a challenging endeavour. The short-term and small-scale nature of many UNITAR projects, coupled with the lack of core resources and pooled funding, prevent us from producing more substantial and enduring results.













- The Secretary-General's report on repositioning the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda emphasises the need for UN entities to be the best providers in their domain, to follow integrated approaches, to be responsive to the differentiated demands of Member States, to deliver as one in partnership with UN system entities, to be nimble and agile and to be results-driven. The report also highlights skillset gaps in areas such as leveraging partnerships, financing, data and policy integration, which need to be bridged. Many groups of countries, including those in special situations, have also elaborated on their capacity development priorities in the respective plans of action.
- In response, we will capitalize on UNITAR's expertise in the design and delivery of high-quality learning solutions and related knowledge products and services that are both people-centred and respond to the specific needs of Member States and other stakeholders of the United Nations. Guided by our advisory bodies, we will utilise our inhouse learning support expertise to promote the holistic and transversal nature of the 2030 Agenda through transdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches in our programming. We will leverage partnerships with a range of knowledge organizations and researchrelated bodies with a view to realizing win-win solutions that enhance the spirit of the 2030 Agenda and a shared future for humankind.
- In supporting countries, we will assign high priority to collaboration and inclusive participation with the overarching goal of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. We will also closely monitor the latest trends in the learning industry, build upon the newest developments in technology and design and deliver innovative products and services to respond to current and future learning needs, such as in sustainable infrastructure and the rapidly developing technology sector as the world enters the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Looking forward and building on the experience and lessons from previous plans, we have engaged in a participatory strategic thinking process. We consulted closely with our Board of Trustees to seek guidance on the proposed strategic repositioning of the Institute to reflect the 2030 Agenda's emphasis on peace, people, planet and prosperity. This strategic thinking process also entailed consultations with our partners and other stakeholders, the results of which confirmed the importance that our partners attach to aligning UNITAR's work with the 2030 Agenda, the interconnected nature of the Goals and the high priority assigned to meeting the needs of countries in special situations.
- Becoming fit for the 2030 Agenda and maximizing our potential to contribute to its implementation will require us to make changes in both scale and approach to our programming and how we collaborate with strategic partners within and outside the United Nations. It will also require changes in how we organize and deploy our human and institutional capital as well as in our processes to efficiently and effectively deliver results and learn collectively as an organization.







# Our Vision, Mission and Values

### **Our Vision**

A world in which individuals, institutions and organizations are equipped with the knowledge, skills and other capacities to overcome global challenges.

### **Our Mission**

To develop the individual, institutional and organizational capacities of countries and 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 challenges.

#### **Our Values**

We value products and services which are clientoriented, modern and innovative, and that meet internationally recognized quality standards. We place concomitant value on ensuring a highly inclusive and transparent organization that is nimble and flexible, and accountable to what we deliver and how. It is through embracing these values collectively and individually that we see UNITAR bestpositioned to achieve growth and become a much more impactful, influential and visible organization.

# Our Core Functions

Providing high-quality learning solutions to address the capacity development needs of individuals, organizations and institutions

Advising and supporting governments, the UN and other partners with knowledge services, including those that are technology-based

Facilitating knowledge and experience sharing through networked and innovative processes





Integrating innovative strategies, approaches and methodologies into our learning and related knowledge products and services



# **Becoming Fit-for-Purpose**

The interconnected, universal and transformational nature of the 2030 Agenda and other development platforms calls for collective action, responsibility and accountability through the engagement of a myriad of stakeholders. The 2030 Agenda is a holistic plan of action for peace, people, planet and prosperity, which calls for a profound transformation in the way we look at – and work to achieve – sustainable development.

Contributing meaningfully to the implementation of the Agenda and helping countries achieve the Goals requires us to rethink how our organizational capital is structured and interacts. Programming will continue to be our driver in achieving development results, but it will be amalgamated around the peace, people, planet and prosperity dimensions of the Agenda. These pillars will form the foundation of our strategic objectives, in addition to a fifth objective on cross-fertilizing knowledge to support the indivisible and integrated nature of the Agenda, recognizing that achieving peace, social inclusion, environmental restoration, poverty reduction and sustainable growth are inherently interconnected and require mutually supportive and systemic efforts.



### **Peace**

### Promote peace and just and inclusive societies

Conflicts, new or longstanding, undermine sustainable development. As so eloquently summarized in the 2030 Agenda, "[t]here is no peace without development, there is no development without peace." Tackling violence; addressing root causes of conflict, insecurity and injustice; and strengthening governance and institutions are essential steps to creating a more sustainable future. This is of critical importance at a time when large numbers of people feel that development has left them behind; express a lack of trust in institutions; and are concerned about corruption, violence and instability.

## Promote people's well-being and support equitable representation of countries in global decision-making fora

Far too many people in our world are excluded from meaningful engagement and participation in economic, social and political life. The vulnerable are marginalized and exposed to significant inequalities affecting their wellbeing and livelihoods. Barriers to accessing adequate structures and services for health and sanitation and to quality education, training and lifelong learning opportunities compromise people's productive capacity and, consequently, their ability to contribute to social and economic development. At a macro level, some groups of countries are also exposed to significant inequalities, including barriers to participation and representation in global institutions and decision-making processes.



### **Planet**

### Support the conservation, restoration and safeguarding of our planet for present and future generations

Safeguarding our planet requires efforts from all. Halting natural resource depletion, reducing the impacts of hazardous chemicals on human health and the environment and combating the adverse impacts of climate change are all complex challenges requiring strengthened human and institutional capacities. New legal frameworks; participatory mechanisms; and policies, institutions, strategies and practices are needed to implement the transformations required for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of natural resources.

### **Prosperity**

### Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth

Inclusive sustainable growth is critical for prosperity. People's well-being is rooted in economic, social and environmental security, where opportunities are present and the risks of poverty are reduced, so as to be better positioned to succeed and contribute to societal prosperity. Dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies need to build on the productive capacity of their populations, including youth, women, the vulnerable and the marginalized, as an asset to sustainable development.

### **Cross-fertilizing Knowledge and Expertise**

Promote the indivisible and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda

Knowledge is the fuel that can power the transformations required for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Cross-fertilizing knowledge is part of UNITAR's essence and this will be further strengthened to support the interlinked and holistic nature of the Agenda.

We are also uniquely positioned to support countries in strengthening the means of implementation of the Agenda and particularly the capacities of countries to adopt and localize the Agenda and mainstream the Goals in national development planning and strategies, as well as to promote policy coherence.

# **Implementing our Strategy**

The set of sub-objectives listed below and results areas defined in our biennial programme budgets will guide the implementation of the framework. As a crosscutting focus, we will place emphasis on reaching the furthest behind first by working to address the learning and broader capacity needs of stakeholders from countries in special situations, as well as aiming to achieve gender parity of our beneficiaries by 2021.

To achieve results effectively and efficiently, we will focus much of our work on strengthening our comparative advantage in providing high-quality learning solutions and related knowledge products and services.

We will also maximize the use of our strategic enablers and engage in win-win partnerships with entities within and outside the United Nations to make a greater contribution to helping countries achieve the SDGs and the objectives of the other major platforms of action.

### **Promote peace and** just and inclusive societies



#### **SO 1.1 Support institutions and individuals** to contribute meaningfully to sustainable peace

Sustaining peace entails a broad range of activities aimed at preventing the outbreak. continuation, escalation and recurrence of violent conflict. This sub-objective will focus on supporting institutions and individuals including those who tend to experience marginalization such as indigenous peoples, women, youth and others—to contribute meaningfully to sustainable peace by increasing capacities of stakeholders at different levels to prevent and resolve violent conflicts, restore the rule of law and build lasting peace.

Programming will include activities aimed at strengthening capacities to effectively support social integration and peaceful coexistence: to address root causes of conflict and negotiate and mediate mutually beneficial and lasting solutions; and to establish legal and regulatory frameworks on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice.

UNITAR will also engage in new areas of peace-related programming, including strengthening knowledge and skills of women as change agents in conflict analysis, negotiation and mediation; working with at-risk youth to sensitize peers on how to sustain peace and participate in decision-making processes; strengthening engagement of men and boys as agents of change in efforts to work towards ending conflict-related sexual violence and reducing the stigmatization; improving knowledge and skills on personal conduct towards compliance with the UN Zero Tolerance Policy; and improving the use of modern technologies, particularly in the area of energy, to protect civilians and vulnerable populations.

### Promote people's wellbeing and support equitable representation of countries in global decision-making fora



#### SO 2.1 Promote people's well-being, including the protection and empowerment of groups that have been marginalized and are vulnerable

Learning is crucial to promoting people's wellbeing and social inclusion. It provides a lever for individuals to open doors; understand problems; find solutions; and participate in economic, social and political life. Unfortunately, many segments of society have been marginalized and made vulnerable, such as disabled persons, indigenous peoples, migrants, internally displaced people and refugees. This sub-objective will focus broadly on developing people's well-being, with emphasis on helping individuals acquire knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development. Some examples of activities are learning and related programming focusing on entrepreneurial and productive capacities, the development and implementation of migration policies and education for sustainable development.

## • SO 2.2 Strengthen representation of countries in special situations in institutions of global governance

Supporting and promoting multilateralism and institutions of global governance is of great relevance and importance in today's world. Effective multilateral institutions require equitable representation and strengthened capacities, including knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes, for delegates and other stakeholders to take part meaningfully and constructively in multilateral processes. This sub-objective aims to develop knowledge, skills, awareness and attitudes on the processes, procedures, issues and decision-making arenas of multilateral institutions, with a focus on the United Nations system.

# Support the conservation, restoration and safeguarding of our planet for present and future generations



#### SO 3.1 Foster a green, low-carbon and climate-resilient transition

Enhancing individual and institutional, legal and technical capacities to adapt to climate change is essential, as is supporting the transition to greater resource efficiency, low-carbon growth, responsible consumption and production, based on circular economy principles. Under this sub-objective, we will continue to work with various partners, including a broad spectrum of UN entities and national educational institutions, to design, develop and implement learning strategies as a pathway to achieving green, low-carbon and climate-resilient development. We will focus on developing both foundational knowledge and applied skills in the analysis of climate vulnerabilities and risks, the identification and prioritization of response measures and in the design and implementation of strategies to promote green growth and climate change resilience.

### • SO 3.2 Strengthen the sound and sustainable management of chemicals and waste

Learning and broader capacity development activities under this sub-objective will continue efforts to strengthen the legal, technical and infrastructural capacities of governments and other relevant stakeholders to implement chemicals and waste conventions, global agreements and systems. These efforts will be critical during the period of 2018 to 2021 as the international community negotiates a new framework for the sound management of chemicals beyond 2020.

#### SO 3.3 Improve the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources

Activities under this sub-objective will focus on the enhancement of capacities of key stakeholders to contribute to the implementation of internationally agreed environmental obligations. New programming will include renewable energy and cooperation in the production and management of clean energy technology; legal, technical and other capacities for legal frameworks pertaining to oceans and seas; and ecosystem-based approaches to protect marine and coastal ecosystems.

# Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth



#### SO 4.1 Help countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth

Decent employment opportunities for all, particularly for youth, women and the vulnerable and marginalized, are of utmost importance for ensuring economic growth and people's well-being. Moreover, it is of key importance to strengthen institutional capacities on trade, finance, anti-corruption, debt financing, relief, restructuring and sound management to decrease economic inequalities. In times of globalization, strong multi-stakeholder collaborations across all sectors help carry forward worldwide initiatives on sustainable development. This sub-objective focuses on supporting countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth<sup>1</sup> and to create decent work opportunities for all by strengthening employability capacities; developing skills for multi-stakeholder collaboration; and enhancing knowledge on trade, finance, debt and statistics.

<sup>1</sup> Including through national initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative.

# Promote the indivisible and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda



### SO 5.1 Optimize the use of technologies, including geospatial technologies, for evidence-based decision making

Science and technology are key elements for implementing the SDGs and are of great importance in enhancing capacities at national and regional levels. The use of technologybased and innovative solutions will continue to play an important role in supporting better informed and evidence-based decisionmaking processes by the UN system and Member States, in developing solutions with an integrated approach and in reaching more beneficiaries. In addition to delivering imagery analysis and satellite solutions to relief and development organizations, we will develop and deliver learning solutions based on cutting-edge technologies, particularly with a view to reducing inequalities which stem from unequal access to and benefits from technological advances.

### SO 5.2 Support coherence and evidencedbased policies of the 2030 Agenda

The 2030 Agenda will require all countries and stakeholders to work together to implement the SDGs and it is crucial to increase the awareness and understanding of Goals and targets amongst various constituencies. Capacities of Member States and key partners for implementing and monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda will be strengthened, with emphasis on enhancing the capacities of countries in special situations in promoting coherent and evidence-based policies and in improving multi-stakeholder engagement at the national level.

## • SO 5.3 Equip institutions to improve the quality of learning opportunities

Activities under this sub-objective will strengthen the capacities of training-related institutions, particularly those located in developing countries, to design and implement outcomebased learning in technical and vocational skills and lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Strategic Enablers**

### **People and Partnerships**

Our human capital is—and will always be our most important asset. Responding to our clients' needs and delivering knowledgebased products and services effectively and efficiently through modern and innovative approaches, requires our 100 plus professionals—from all backgrounds and at all levels—to be collaborative, dynamic and resilient: to master the set of skills and other competencies in our respective work areas; to embrace the set of core UN values and to internalize a culture of learning and continuous improvement. Developing essential knowledge and skills of our staff for the implementation of our strategy will be a primary commitment. We will elaborate a specific competency framework reflecting the knowledge and related products and services that we produce, providing means for the development of attitudes and behaviours needed to implement our strategic framework.

Our institutional partnerships are also an integral part of achieving effective and efficient results. We will pursue new strategic partnerships to respond to new thematic imperatives, such as preventing violent extremism, promoting health and managing migration. Working through partnerships across and beyond the UN development system, including entities within the network of UN research and training institutes, other UN organizations, the private sector, academia and civil society, we will strive to ensure coordinated action, collaborating widely on global efforts for sustainable development.

### **Quality, Learning** and Evaluation

Quality is one of our fundamental values, and it will also enable us to achieve effective. measurable results. Internal and external quality assurance processes will continue to validate programme quality, contributing to learning and continuous quality improvement.

In addition to our quality assurance mechanism, a new knowledge and learning design service function will support our programming to ensure that high standards of quality are applied for effective and efficient outcomebased learning, and that a more harmonized and collaborative approach to tackling both thematic and integrated programming is pursued. We will seek new tools, methods and approaches that align with the way people learn. innovating to enable the acquisition, retention and application of the type of knowledge needed for the transformative change required to support the prosperity advocated in the 2030 Agenda. On a revenue-generating basis, this function will also respond to external client needs, such as the network of associated International Training Centres for Authorities and Leaders, the UN and other international organizations, national governments and other institutional clients in conjunction with the aforementioned training-related institutions.

Our approach to evaluation will be forwardlooking and strategic. In addition to performance and accountability, we will focus on lesson learning and quality improvement. Self-evaluations will continue to be undertaken regularly, but we will further strengthen our independent evaluation practices to ensure that credible, evidence-based information informs decisions, while also engaging in joint evaluation undertakings with other UN entities.

## **Strategic Communication**

A strengthened communications function will increase the visibility of UNITAR as a recognized centre of excellence in training and learning. We will prioritize the use of new and traditional communication channels, further strengthen exchanges with UN entities for the sharing of good practices, create a more interactive and collaborative environment and educate staff and other personnel on the importance of disseminating coherent and compelling content to external audiences. We will also facilitate coordination among different units and programmes for better communication results.

## **Business Processes**

Our key financial, human resource, procurement and IT processes will continue to play an instrumental role in supporting programme delivery. We will transform our finance and budget function to provide programmes with advice to take sound and strategic decisions. We will upgrade the information architecture and use new tools to provide forward-looking financial information to improve the execution of business processes. We will also explore and implement various strategies for optimizing cash flows, Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable, to achieve the required financial flexibility for sustaining operations. Our human resources will also ensure efficiency in contract management and transparency of corporate processes in hiring, promotion and performance management. We will simplify and harmonize procurement practices to further increase efficiency and effectiveness.

We will develop and maintain secure, scalable and robust IT systems, standardizing IT equipment for cost effectiveness and efficient user support, streamlining processes related to IT infrastructure and exploring new opportunities for IT training for all personnel.

Given our core focus on developing capacities through learning and related services, we will keep abreast of new trends and technological developments in online learning.

### Assumptions, Risks and Challenges

Implementing our strategic objectives cannot be done without acknowledging certain assumptions, risks and challenges. For a small, voluntary-funded organization, these assumptions, risks and challenges are multiple, sometimes significant and, almost always, interrelated.

UNITAR continues to be exposed to the risks and challenges of operating in a changing and highly unpredictable financial and economic climate, with no core resources, low and unpredictable non-earmarked contributions and little, if any, pooled funding opportunities. Some key assumptions are: that UNITAR will maintain the current proportion of non-earmarked voluntary contributions to the General Fund as income increases: that UNITAR will succeed in expanding the scope, scale and duration of its various projects; and that the current large number of low-value transactions will be minimized so that increased efficiencies in administrative, financial, human resources and procurement processes can be realized.

UNITAR is also exposed to an uncertain political climate and/or security threats in parts of the world where some of the most promising, large-scale projects are being implemented, which can produce delays and, in extreme cases, curtail implementation.

From an administrative and organizational perspective, successfully implementing the strategy assumes that UNITAR staff and divisional entities will embrace collaborative practices for working across programming and thematic pillars and pursue integrated, holistic initiatives that contribute to multiple Goals and targets, and that adequate resources will be mobilized for new functions or those requiring upscaling.

Externally, this will also require smarter engagement with key strategic partners, including organizations within and outside the United Nations, donors and implementing partners, to ensure that UNITAR's expertise in designing learning and related solutions to capacity needs contributes to other efforts to help countries—particularly those in special situations—achieve the targets of the Agenda and other plans of action.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Monitoring progress, evaluating and regular reporting on the implementation of the strategic framework will be essential. Performance monitoring will be enhanced, with a set of indicators and metrics to link our result areas to the SDG global indicators. Monitoring will be undertaken at both the managerial and corporate levels based on the indicators and performance measures in the programme budgets, with performance reports issued to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis, as well as a mid-term evaluation. Moreover, we will contribute actively to UN system-wide reporting efforts as required. In addition to serving as an accountability tool, such evaluation will support organizational learning and inform any revisions to the framework.





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