



**unitar**

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

**Knowledge** to lead



## **Establishment of UNITAR presence in Bergen, Norway**

**Activities, settings and budget**

**Version 1.0 as of 29 June 2009**

## Contents

Background.....	1
Mandate .....	1
Institutional setting .....	2
Strategic thematic areas.....	2
Humanitarian emergencies .....	3
Human rights .....	3
Climate change and disaster risk reduction .....	3
Strategic Aims and Work Plan .....	4
Office premises.....	4
Staffing.....	6
Annual Core Budget.....	7
Annex 1 : Description of core local partners .....	8
University of Bergen (UoB).....	9
Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research.....	9
Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Centre .....	10
Rafto Foundation.....	10
Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI).....	11
City of Bergen .....	11
Hordaland County.....	12
UN Association.....	13
Annex 2 : Support letters from relevant actors.....	14

## Background

Support to the UNITAR Bergen Office initiative comes from a unanimous Bergen City Council decision, from expressed support by the Hordaland County, and a positive attitude by the national Government. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a long standing donor to the UNOSAT programme for humanitarian support activities.

Discussions with the Bergen local authorities concerning potential establishment of a UNITAR presence were initiated at high level in early 2007 and have generated wide interest and support in Bergen and Norway. UNITAR Executive Director's letter to City of Bergen as of 24 October 2008 confirmed the Institute's interest to further explore the foreseen presence. Since the initial talks in 2007, UNITAR has carried out three missions to further explore the potential for establishing a Bergen office. In addition, Bergen City visited Geneva in February 2009 and a presentation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the City of Bergen and UNITAR was made the same month.

A joint letter from the City of Bergen and Hordaland County officially inviting the Government to support the effort of establishing a UNITAR office in Bergen has been sent. In this letter, a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been requested and to which an answer is expected shortly. Bergen authorities are ready to provide physical space and facilitate funds to establish the office in 2009.

During a UNITAR mission to Bergen in January 2009, UNOSAT's Manager presented the concept of CIFAL centres and how such a centre may be interesting to the region. This concept was found to be of interest to the City of Bergen, as it already has cooperation with specific cities globally and is heading a Norwegian regional initiative on Governance. However, The City of Bergen found it premature to further advance on such discussions prior to the establishment of the UNITAR office and suggested to further explore this potential once the UNITAR office was in place.

This document is a Work Plan describing the mandate, institutional setting, thematic areas, annual activities, office premises, staffing and budget. Annexed are descriptions of initial local partners to the UNITAR Bergen Office and support letter from relevant actors.

## Mandate

UNITAR's Bergen Office will be a hub for the Institute's collaboration with Nordic actors. The expertise available regionally, nationally and locally in the fields of *humanitarian assistance, human rights and climate change research* is significant. The office will ensure this and other expertise is channelled through relevant UNITAR programs and activities. Most relevant of these are the Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), Climate Change, Governance Unit as well as Peace, Security and Diplomacy Unit.

Mandate of office:

1. Act as UNITAR antenna for the Nordic countries and provide a link between relevant UNITAR programmes and activities and the expertise existing in Norway and other Nordic countries
2. Implement ground-breaking research with focus on humanitarian, human rights and climate change thematic, including mapping output when appropriate
3. Facilitate fund raising for all UNITAR programmes concerned

## Institutional setting

The Bergen Office will be an integral part of the UN Institute for Training and Research – UNITAR.

The Chief of the Bergen Office will report via the appropriate UNITAR structures and, for the work related to the various UNITAR programmes, he/she will liaise with the Programme Managers.

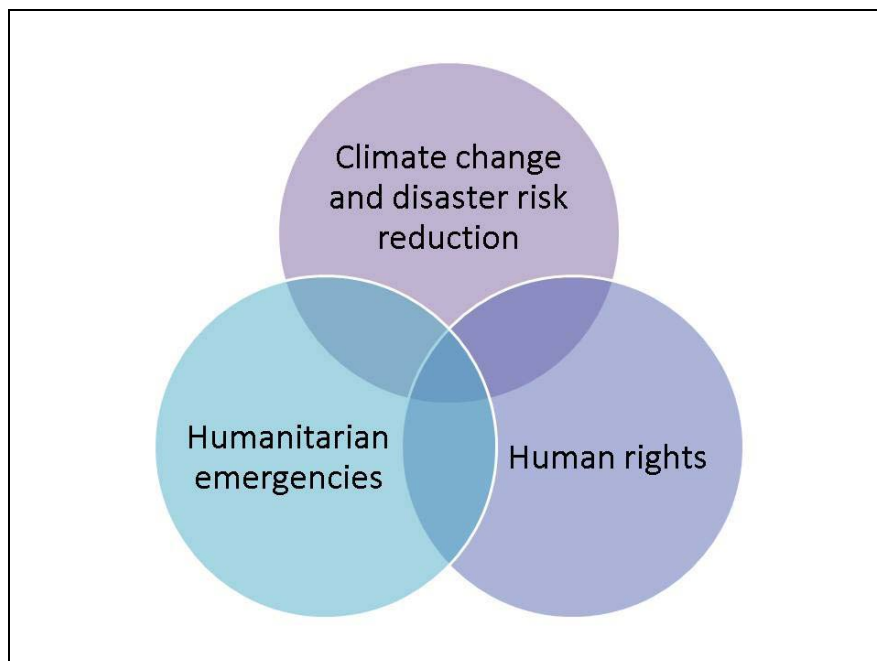
The nature of the UNITAR Office in Bergen will be similar to other UNITAR offices established and to be established in other host countries (Japan, USA, Brazil, Nigeria). A host agreement may be required between the Government of Norway and UNITAR to describe the legal nature of the UNITAR office.

## Strategic thematic areas

The office will focus on some specific areas with high potential for synergy to combine technical solutions and social sciences at the crossroads of humanitarian emergencies, human rights, and climate change research, including disaster risk reduction, see figure 1.

As a result of this work, the Bergen Office will be beneficial to both agencies and member states involved in the activities and ongoing dialogue on the in the interplay between humanitarian emergencies, human rights, and climate change, thus offering a unique opportunity to consolidate and develop further knowledge in these fields, also building on the wealth of experience existing in the Nordic Countries.

Technology intensive activities will be carried out using the technological backstopping and data processing & storage power of CERN, via the UNOSAT computing centre. It is expected that UNITAR Bergen Office will also increase the output of UNOSAT in the form of maps and analyses in current and new thematic areas.



*Figure 1: Thematic areas for which the office will focus*

### ***Humanitarian emergencies***

UNITAR, through its programme UNOSAT, has continuously been operationally active in support to humanitarian emergencies since 2003. In total over 150 events have benefited from satellite analysis support during floods, earthquakes, landslides, storms, forest fire and conflict situations. UNOSAT typically works in collaboration with sister agencies such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). Non-UN entities such as the Red Cross movement (ICRC and IFRC) and a wide range of NGOs also receive the same direct support. UN Member States frequently request the assistance of UNOSAT, which completes the wide range of UNOSAT users.

In addition to the above, it is anticipated that collaboration with locally based Red Cross movement and the UN Association, active in advocacy, will be an important task, as will be the link with technical solutions developed by local research and business actors. The Bergen Office will act as the UNITAR focal point for the existing collaborations with Nordic UNITAR/UNOSAT partners: KSAT (Norway), Metria (Sweden) and KMS (Denmark), which will further strengthen the operational work of UNOSAT.

### ***Human rights***

There is a natural link from humanitarian emergencies to human rights and UNOSAT works to document potential human rights abuses through objective image-analysis. This activity is welcome by the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) and more work is expected in the future.

UNITAR is already exploring how future trends in climate change may affect local populations and human rights in general. Bergen and Norway have sound capacity in human rights research and advocacy. Entities such as the University of Bergen, Rafto Foundation, Christian Michelsen Institute, UN Association of Norway, and City of Bergen are committed to working with UNITAR in this domain.

The City of Bergen is currently exploring the potential to develop a charter-document on human rights and climate change. The City has welcomed UNITAR's participation to this work.

### ***Climate change and disaster risk reduction***

Natural disasters are increasing in frequency and magnitude with devastating humanitarian consequences in-line with climate change predictions. UNITAR's Bergen Office will work with local, national and Nordic expertise, including members to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to address these issues. It is necessary to couple climate change models at sub-national level with satellite remote sensing and field data in a holistic approach to ensure improved adaptation and coping capacity in developing countries.

Locally, Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research, Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Centre and the University of Bergen are committed to working with UNITAR's Bergen office ensuring synergy among the identified thematic areas.

## Strategic Aims and Work Plan

The first year will focus on establishing the office activities and strategy, making the various links with UNITAR programmes, building partnership with local and Nordic expert entities, carrying out internal training of staff, and deploying public outreach activities.

The aim over the next two years is to consolidate the Office as a centre of excellence for the integration of knowledge and solutions in the areas common to humanitarian emergencies, human rights, and climate change in keeping with today's global challenges and future complex global scenarios.

In addition to the above, the Bergen Office will have an annual work plan including a range of activities and various collaborations. The annual work plan will include some typical activities, as illustrated below:

1. Active collaboration with Nordic partners in the context of regional and international initiatives in the three identified strategic thematic areas
2. Leadership in new, ground-breaking collaborative research activities within the three identified thematic areas
3. Active networking in Norway and other Nordic countries to create synergy and collaboration for the benefit of all UNITAR programmes
4. Access Nordic expertise in satellite solutions in support of UNOSAT operational work
5. Facilitate fund-raising of UNITAR activities
6. Organize an annual conference on research and good practices related to the interplay between humanitarian emergencies, human rights and climate change
7. Organise or co-sponsor thematic workshops and dedicated training events in Bergen and elsewhere
8. Participate in local, national and Nordic region awareness raising and public outreach activities
9. Maintain open communication channels with the Norwegian authorities and cct as the UNITAR liaison office for the Nordic region

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the Office activities will be performed according to UNITAR rules, leading to a first overall evaluation of the Office, which will take place three years after its establishment.

## Office premises

The physical premises need to be suitable so to allow the staff to carry out its functions in an effective and appropriate environment, including the necessary technological support. An appropriate location has been identified by the Bergen authorities and was visited and found suitable by UNITAR officials (see details below).

As a requirement, the UNITAR Bergen Office will need separate dedicated office space (full floor or part of a floor in an office building, for example) and it will require access control and some security measures as per UN rules and regulations (see below).

With an expected number of 12 staff and interns working for the most part in an open office environment, the office will need:

- One main room carrying a minimum of 12 work-stations in an open office environment with two large display screens. The office space should also have capacity for three additional experts/researchers working on specific short term assignments.

- One separate office for the chief of office with a meeting-corner.
- One separate meeting room with a large display screen, accommodating at least 15 people and featuring internet and phone connection for virtual web meetings and telephone conferences.
- A small coffee area and kitchenette within the office space would be desirable.

The following rules and instructions emanating from the UN Security & Safety Service will apply:

1. Office should not be located on the ground floor
2. Office should entail a confined space, i.e. not intermixed with other individual office desks in the same building. However, no problem to for example to share half of a floor as long as separated.
3. Office should have its own entrance/front door.
4. Fire safety door type T30 or higher should be in place for fire exit(s).
5. It is recommended to have access to the office using security code or magnetic card (no keys).
6. It is mandatory for all windows in the office to have anti-shatter film. This is a film to be draped on existing windows.
7. Alarm system should be in place.
8. Fire detection and firefighting equipment should be available and staff trained in its use.

Upon identification of a suitable office location, a UN security officer should go on mission to Bergen to ensure the various elements have been taken into consideration.

The city of Bergen in consultation with UNITAR has identified possible premises. These are located on Marineholmen and are state of the art concerning environmental efficiency and climate responsibility. The heating comes from underground water pipes connected to the City of Bergen's waste disposal site where heat is generated from waste-burning. The building has a direct recycling system whereby paper and other recyclables are sent instantly from the office to a central intermediary recycling facility for the whole building complex. In addition, indoor bicycle parking space with lockers and showers encourage staff to use this transportation means. The new tramway line, to be inaugurated in 2010, has a main stop outside the office building, and electrical cars can be charged in the nearby parking house. Figure 2 illustrates the proposed office building which is scheduled to be ready by mid-2009. The area is also part of Norway's "Cities of the Future" project to foster innovative research, business and start-up companies, in particular IT and energy. An important additional aspect of this location is to promote science and research to the general public.



Figure 2: Proposed office building at Marineholmen. Reserved office building on first floor currently being finalized indicated by arrow. Top: Access view. Bottom: Ocean side view.

## Staffing

The office is expected to have 7 core staff (funded out of the office budget), and an additional 5 collaborators funded or seconded by external partners. These collaborators will typically be interns, secondees and/or JPOs. The expected team composition:

- Chief of office
- Programme officer
- Administrative assistant
- Specialized experts (2)
- Research associates (2)
- Secondees and/or JPO (2)
- Interns (3)

It should be noted that it is expected the office will generate further research project funding, which will lead to increase the number of personnel for the duration of the project(s).

## Annual Core Budget

The annual core budget is listed below. In addition the Office will seek project funding for specific and additional initiatives from a variety of donors including the private sector.

Staff	Unit cost (US\$)	Quantity	Total
Chief of office (L5)	200,000	1	200,000
Programme Officer (L3)	150,000	1	150,000
Administrative Assistant (G4)	120,000	1	120,000
Specialised Experts	120,000	2	240,000
Research Associates	63,000	2	126,000
<i>Total staff</i>		7	<i>836,000</i>
<b>Operating costs (international + local)</b>			
Premises	90,000	1	90,000
Phone and IT services	50,000	1	50,000
Software maintenance	30,000	1	30,000
Cleaning and maintenance	20,000	1	20,000
Travel	2,000	15	30,000
Promotion material	5,000	1	5,000
Contingency	10% of above op. costs	1	22,500
<i>Total operating costs</i>			<i>247,500</i>
<b>Data costs</b>			
Satellite imagery, GIS data	100,000	1	100,000
<i>Total data costs</i>			<i>100,000</i>
<b><i>Total annual budget</i></b>			<b><i>1,183,500</i></b>

Start-up costs budget (already allocated by City of Bergen)

Item	Unit cost (US\$)	Quantity	Total
Furniture	20,000	1	20,000
Computers	3,000	10	30,000
Servers	10,000	2	20,000
Software purchase	20,000	1	20,000
Office equipment	10,000	1	10,000
Inauguration ceremony	10,000	1	10,000
Technical support missions	25,000	1	25,000
<b><i>Total start-up costs</i></b>			<b><i>135,000</i></b>

Annex 1 : Description of core local partners

### **University of Bergen (UoB)**

The University of Bergen is a young, modern university. Most of its premises are concentrated in the heart of the city of Bergen. There are about 14,500 students enrolled, and 3,200 faculty and staff. Read more.

The University's academic landscape is characterised by its great variety and breadth. Six faculties cover most of the traditional university disciplines. Within the faculties are included 60 different specialised departments, centres and institutes.

- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Law – *including human rights*
- Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences – *including geophysics and climate change*
- Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
- Faculty of Psychology
- Faculty of Social Sciences

There are also an increasing number of multi-disciplinary research centres, projects and units. International students are offered master-level and doctoral training at the University of Bergen. The University of Bergen is constantly interfacing with the international environment in order to expand its borders and to explore the world. It is heavily involved in international co-operation in research and education. The university has signed bilateral agreements with universities, research institutions and academic centres of excellence in all parts of the world. UoB is also committed to co-operating with developing countries and has established programmes with universities in Third World Countries in the areas of health, poverty, and resource management. The University is engaged in the European Union's Framework programmes for research and technological development and has been designated as a European Research Infrastructure and a Research Training Site in several scientific fields.

UNITAR has already had constructive discussions with the Department of Geophysics, which is involved in multiple international research projects on earth system modelling. The Department is deeply involved in the Bergen Climate Model which is also being used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Department of Geophysics is hosting the cross-faculty University Climate Research initiative and works with renowned institutes such as MIT. Its head sits in the Norwegian UNESCO committee.

The Department of Sociology works among other thematics on global poverty and climate change as human rights challenges. Questions related to results from climate change and their impact on human rights of vulnerable communities around the world is addressed. The Department of Sociology is thus a natural partner of the UNITAR Bergen Office integration of different fields of research.

### **Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research**

The Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research (BCCR) is the largest climate research centre in the Nordic countries and among the leading centres in Europe. The centre has an international profile with leading expertise within climate understanding, climate modeling and scenarios for future climate changes and quantification of climate changes. BCCR offers excellent

opportunities for research, with a main focus on northern Europe and the polar regions, and is a key provider of first-rate knowledge on climate change to policy makers, industry, and the general public. The Bjerknes Centre has more authors in the last IPCC report than any other Nordic research institution, and is one of four European centres that delivered climate scenarios to the report. BCCR coordinates the Norwegian activities for developing climate models/earth system models in advance of the next IPCC report in close collaboration with for example UoB.

A benchmarking of international climate centres in 2008 placed the Bjerknes Centre as number 2, ranging ahead of many known climate centres in the USA, Europe, Asia and Australia. After five years as a national Centre of Excellence (CoE) BCCR has been through a midway evaluation by an international committee, on behalf of the Research Council of Norway. The overall grading of achievements from the committee was “exceptionally good”. The scientific staff consists of more than 100 researchers and scholars, who come from Norway and several other European countries, USA, Canada, China and several countries in Africa, Asia and South America. BCCR’s director has warmly welcomed a UNITAR Office in Bergen.

### ***Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Centre***

Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Center (NERSC) is an independent non-profit research institute affiliated with the University of Bergen, Norway. The Nansen Center conducts basic and applied environmental research funded by national and international governmental agencies, research councils and industry. Fritjof Nansen, whom the centre is named after, was a famous Norwegian scientist, explorer and humanitarian. He became the first High Commissioner for Refugees, under what at the time was the League of Nations.

NERSC's vision is to make a significant contribution to the understanding, monitoring and forecasting of the world's environment and climate on regional and global scales. This is done through coordination and participation in national and international research programs focusing on for example:

- Studies of global and regional climate processes using numerical models together with observations from earth-monitoring satellites and field experiments.
- Studies of coastal zone processes and ecosystem dynamics by integrated use of high resolution ocean circulation models and observations through advanced data assimilation systems.
- Studies of sea ice processes using coupled numerical models and observations from satellite.
- Operational monitoring and forecasting of the coastal zone as a tool for management and risk assessment.
- Operational monitoring and forecasting of ice conditions as a service to offshore industry, ship traffic and fishing industry.

### ***Rafto Foundation***

The Rafto Foundation is a non-profit and non-partisan organization dedicated to the global promotion of human rights. The main activities of the Foundation are:

- the annual presentation of the Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize for human rights work
- projects concerning the Rafto Laureates
- and the continuous organization of educational projects promoting human rights

Rafto Foundation is internationally recognized for its expertise and frequently works on the same issues that the Nobel Peace Prize Committee focuses on. Rafto Foundation will be able to provide significant insight in special causes and events where UNITAR can further assist and benefit.

### ***Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI)***

Named after Norway's first Prime Minister, the Bergen-citizen Christian Michelsen, CMI is an independent centre for research on international development and policy. CMI was founded in 1930 and conducts both applied and theoretical research, and has a multidisciplinary profile anchored in four thematic research groups, all highly relevant to UNITAR's programmes and activities:

- Rights, Democracy and Development
- Peace, Conflict and the State
- Poverty Reduction
- Public Sector Reform

The geographical focus is Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern and Central Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

### ***City of Bergen***

Ever since its foundation in 1070, Bergen has attracted people from all quarters of the world. Today Bergen is a melting pot of arts and culture, activities at sea, oil and gas and academic endeavours. With a population of 250.000, Bergen is Norway's second largest city and the capital of Western Norway, which is the leading region for all significant Norwegian export industries. Bergen is also a vital centre for art and culture and has one of the world's oldest symphony orchestras, the country's first national theatre, a whole range of museums and institutions, and is the host of Bergen International Festival. Bergen was the birthplace of the famous composer Edvard Grieg.

Bergen has a parliamentary model of government. The City Council elects the City Government, an executive body, which answers to the City Council, just as a national government answers to a national parliament.

The City Government consists of 5 members called Commissioners. The Commissioners have a function similar to that of government ministers, and the Chief Commissioner is the "Prime Minister" of Bergen. The City Government is accountable to the City Council and dependent on its confidence. The City Government runs the city administration, makes propositions to the City Council and is responsible for carrying out decisions made by the City Council. The City Government also has the authority to make its own decisions on various issues. Every Commissioner is the political leader of a department, which is comparable to a government ministry. The departments oversee the city's administration and services.

Bergen is member of a large number of international organisations and networks, such as

- Eurocities : Bergen has been a member of Eurocities since 2002 and takes part in the following fora: Knowledge Society, Culture, Environment, Mobility and Social Affairs.
- The Hansa League : is an active network of towns and cities that historically belonged to the association of merchant towns known as the Hanseatic League, or had lively trading exchanges with it. The new HANSE was founded in 1980 in the Dutch town of Zwolle.

- The Organisation of World Heritage Cities : The Bryggen area was inscribed on Unesco's World Heritage List in 1979 and Bergen held the presidency of the organisation from 1999 to 2001. The regional secretariat of North West Europe is located in Bergen. Bergen has and still is playing an active role in the projects CitytoCity and Youth on the trail of world heritage
- ECAD - European Cities Against Drugs
- ECLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
- European Climate Forum : Bergen is the first municipality to become a member of the forum.

Recently, the City of Bergen has started to explore the possibilities for a Charter on Climate Change and Human Rights as part of its participation to the Cities of the Future initiative. The UN Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights has been made aware of this initiative and requested to be kept updated on the developments. Questions concerning the rights of individuals and duties of authorities, both national and local are addressed in this work.

*The City Council has unanimously agreed to welcome the presence of a UNITAR office in Bergen.*

### **Hordaland County**

Public administration in Norway has a structure with the following elements: central government, county government and municipal government. The administration of Hordaland County is located in Bergen, known as the gateway to Western Norway. Hordaland County Council is responsible for county policies within the following fields: Secondary education, cultural affairs, communications, dental health, economic development and regional planning, including the development of the road system.

Hordaland County Council's international vision is; "Western-Norway – a creative, including and wealth producing region in Europe". In order to achieve this, Hordaland will encourage the cooperation with institutions in other European countries. The main instruments of cooperation are:

- Cooperating regions
- European organisations
- International Projects
- The West Norway Office in Brussels

Hordaland County Council is member of the following interregional organisations;

- Assembly of European Regions (AER)
- Conference on Peripheral and maritime Regions (CPMR) including the North Sea Commission (NSC)
- Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC)

Although Norway is not a member of the EU, Norwegian organisations and institutions can still participate in over 30 European programs. Hordaland County Council has concentrated its effort on three programs:

- Youth in action
- Lifelong Learning Program, with a special emphasis on the Leonardo da Vinci sector program
- Interreg – EU's program for interregional cooperation, where Hordaland can participate in sub-programs IVB: North Sea Program, Northern Periphery Program and the Baltic Sea Program, as well as IVC: Interregional cooperation Hordaland County Council is also the national contact point for the North Sea Program

Hordaland County Council has two departments involved in the county's international activities:

- The European Office, which is the county's operative international office - coordinating the participation in different EU-programs, as well as being the home administration for the West Norway Office in Brussels.
- International Affairs, which is the county's strategic unit for the coordination and development of international activities, and is also responsible for the cooperating regions and European organisations.

### ***UN Association***

The United Nations Association of Norway (UNA Norway) provides information on topics related to the United Nations, and relevant international issues. The organisation aims to heighten the level of awareness about these related topics among its target groups, which range from the educational system to the media and public in general.

UNA Norway aims to:

- Promote a general interest and launch debate on key international issues
- Promote a keener understanding of the motivations and dynamics behind international politics
- Encourage positive attitudes towards solidarity and commitment to international cooperation
- Forge a societal consensus on the fact that solutions do exist

UNA Norway offers information materials, courses and lectures, counselling, and press services. Its library services include background information on UN conferences, UN reports, Security Council Resolutions, and UN fact-based information. The organisation is run independently without any political affiliations, and spans throughout the country with 65 nation-wide member organisations. UNA Norway is also a member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA).

UNA Norway's regional office in Bergen covers west-Norway and focuses in particular on north-south issues, the environment, development assistance, UN and international collaboration as well as human rights.

## Annex 2 : Support letters from relevant actors

- University of Bergen (UoB)
- Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research
- Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Centre (in process)
- Rafto Foundation
- Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) (in process)
- Norwegian Space Centre
- UN Association, Norway



**UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN, GEOPHYSICAL INSTITUTE**

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To whom it may concern

Bergen, 11 June 2009

**LETTER OF SUPPORT**

On behalf of the Geophysical Institute, University of Bergen, I would like to express support and enthusiasm concerning the efforts to establish a UNITAR Bergen office.

The Geophysical Institute of the University of Bergen is heavily involved in marine and global research, also coordination of such activities on behalf of the university as a whole and well linked to other institutions in the region. The institute hosts the university branch of the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research. Some of our students and staff are involved in satellite remote sensing, often in collaboration with the Nansen Centre. We foresee possibilities for interaction with UNITAR from both staff and students, including possibly directing student theses towards topics of mutual interest.

On a more personal note, I would like to add that I see this establishment as important also for interaction with the UN system as a whole ("Acting as one") and potential links to Norwegian and Nordic involvement in particular with UNESCO and UNEP activities.

We very much welcome the establishment of a UNITAR Bergen office.

Peter M. Haugan  
Professor and head of Geophysical Institute

Bergen, June 17th 2009

Francesco Pisano  
UNOSAT Manager  
UNITAR Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland

## **LETTER OF SUPPORT**

### **UNITAR Bergen office**

The Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research is very pleased to welcome the plans for establishment of a UNITAR mission in Bergen, and we herewith confirm our intents to become a collaborative partner. The Bjerknes Centre is the largest climate research centre in the Nordic countries and is one of the national centres of excellence in Norwegian research. We have specific competence in climate modeling, including regional analyses and weather extreme events which may be of interest in the scope of the UNITAR mission here.

We look forward to be collaborating with UNITAR and to further discuss the various aspects of mutual interest.

Sincerely yours



Eystein Jansen  
Prof. /Director  
Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research



RAFTOSTIFTELSEN

UNITAR  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10 – Switzerland

Bergen, Norway, June 16th 2009

Att: Francesco Pisano  
UNOSAT Manager

### **Concerning the establishment of a UNITAR office in Bergen Norway**

On behalf of The Rafto Foundation, I hereby express our strong support for the initiative to establish a United Nations Institute for Training and Research office in Bergen. The Rafto Foundation believes that the establishment of a UNITAR office will strengthen the vital local network of organizations already working in the area to promote human rights, and provide a very valuable addition to the human rights research and teaching taking place in the region.

The Rafto Foundation is a non-profit and non-partisan organization, established in the humanistic tradition of the Helsinki Accord, and dedicated to the global promotion of human rights. The Rafto Foundation aims to promote the three fundamental human rights of intellectual, political and economic freedom. The main activities of the foundation are (1) the annual presentation of the Rafto Prize for human rights; (2) following up the work of the Rafto Laureates through the organization of conferences, lobbying, information dissemination, documentary production and other projects; and (3) educational projects promoting the general understanding of human rights issues.

The Rafto Foundation has close relations with local research institutions such as the Chr. Michelsen Institute, the University of Bergen and the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration. In addition, we draw upon the resources in local cultural institutions, the business community, the city and county bodies, local and regional schools, and other NGOs. We appreciate a longstanding cooperation with the UN Association of Norway, in particular the regional office. We are proud to be entrusted with the responsibility of presenting the UN flag at the Human Rights Plaza maintained by the Rafto Foundation outside the Rafto House. The Rafto House provides working space for several NGOs, including the regional branches of Amnesty International, Medics Sans Frontiers, and AFS Intercultural Exchange.

We welcome the UNITAR office as a future participant in the local network of organizations working to promote human rights, and hope that we may also be a valuable contributor to the work of UNITAR.

Yours sincerely,

Therese Jebsen

Executive Director, The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights

Francesco Pisano  
UNOSAT Manager  
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

Deres ref./Your ref.:

Vår ref./Our ref.:

Dato/Date:

306/TW/GDS/2008-94

Oslo, June 15, 2009

### **Establishment of a UN UNITAR office in Bergen, Norway**

The Norwegian Space Centre is aware that UN is considering the possible establishment of a UNITAR office in Bergen, Norway.

It is the view of the Norwegian Space Centre that the city of Bergen would be an excellent choice for such a UNITAR office. The rare combination of geophysical and human rights academic and institutional excellence in Bergen justifies this.

The latest proof of the strength of this is the success of Norway in the latest Call of the EU's FP7 Space programme. Two out of the ten winning projects in the call are lead from Norway. The Climate Change project, "High latitude Climate Change Monitoring – MONARCH-A" is led by the Nansen Environmental and Remote Sensing Centre in Bergen. In the other project, GEO-PICTURES, the company AnsuR Technologies leads, and in this project UNITAR/UNOSAT is an integrated partner.

Also, we would like to highlight the strong performance of Bergen scientists in the European Space Agency; many of them are Principal Investigators and members of different Mission Advisory Groups. It is worth noting that in the ESA's Science Advisory Committee for Earth Observation (ESAC), Professor Johnny A Johannessen from the Nansen Centre in Bergen is currently chairing this Committee.

The Norwegian Space Centre would like to endorse the establishment of a UN UNITAR office in Bergen, and we look forward to a fruitful cooperation within Earth Observation with the office.

Yours sincerely



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### **On the possibility of opening an UNITAR office in Bergen, Norway**

United Nations Association of Norway (UNA Norway) welcomes the plan for establishing an UNITAR office in Bergen. We see many benefits in establishing such an office:

- Our regional office in Bergen covers the three counties of Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane and Møre og Romsdal. The office is active in public outreach towards Norwegian youth and students. Our office in Bergen will benefit from the UNITAR office and will also be able to provide some services towards UNITAR in terms collaboration on school programs and public information towards a Norwegian public.
- Bergen is a cornerstone in Climate Research focused around the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research, the largest in the Nordic Countries. The establishment of an UNITAR office will strengthen the links between climate researchers and the UN family of organisations working on climate change.
- Bergen has several human rights and development institutions, with Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) as the largest. CMI is the largest centre for development studies in Scandinavia and the second largest institute working on Human Rights in Norway. Both the Rafto Foundation and the University of Bergen is working on Human Rights.
- In Bergen NGOs and governmental agencies works well together. The size of the city and the size of the institutions makes the city ideal for interdisciplinary collaboration. As an example of such collaboration we can mention that we are organising an International Week every October with the participation of most organisations (more than 40). This can serve as a display of the unity felt here.
- United Nations Association of Norway is already using the material UNITAR provides in our educational programmes for students and high school pupils. We use the maps and satellite images in our presentations as well as at our our web pages. We are looking forward to work closely with UNITAR to provide UNITAR materiel for youth and students in the area close to Bergen, and also for the rest of Norway and the Nordic Countries through our website Globalis.no (available in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finnish and Icelandic).

We believe it is within the best traditions of United Nations to share information to the people concerned. UNITAR is in this way adding important value to the efforts to make the United Nations system more open and tranquil .

United Nations Association of Norway is looking forward to work closer with UNITAR.

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