Ensuring Success into the Future: The ICT Management Certification Programme led by **Nir Ben Lavi**

ICT Management Certification Programme:
Ensuring Success into the Future

The Department of Field Support, Information and Communications Technology Division (DFS/ICTD) has embarked on a new path to provide mid-level, field ICT staff with the skills to assume managerial positions. The first ICT Management Certification Programme concluded with a graduating class of managers with the enhanced managerial competencies required to effectively manage ICT teams.

"Good management skills can positively impact productivity, performance, and overall morale," said Rudy Sanchez, Director, ICTD. "The programme allows us to develop tomorrow's leaders, and aligns with our current Global Field Support Strategy to enhance standards and processes, and constantly improve service delivery to the field."

The programme was formally launched by ICTD in 2009, and is administered by the Brindisi-based ICC Training Coordination Unit, in cooperation with ICTD Business Solutions Manager, Gaya Nemali. John Bryce, an outside

vendor, was identified to provide a tailored leadership skills programme.

Candidates were selected by ICTD management based on criteria—including years of service, previous supervisory positions, and years left before retirement. "A candidate's commitment to fully participate also formed a big part of the selection criteria," said Franca Vinci, Training Coordinator, ICC, Brindisi.

The programme began with a pre-assessment questionnaire that allowed the trainer to understand the current roles of participants. Additionally, CITS Chiefs were interviewed to identify areas to be focused on. Comparing the views of managers and participants helped to identify additional skill-building areas, which were then covered in the course modules. "The questionnaire and the interviews helped to identify gaps in current skill sets, and what is required to be a future CITS manager," said Ms. Vinci.

"This methodology creates a highly-targeted curriculum tailored to each candidate's growth areas," said Ms. Nemali. "Catering to individual needs, and not pushing a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, is important to delivering to the specific ICT needs of peacekeeping."

The first of the three modules was held at the Entebbe Support Base (ESB) in Uganda in November 2009; the second and third at UNLB in November 2010 and March 2011 respectively. Programme content covered essential leadership competencies as well as critical skills such as PRINCE2 project management methodologies.

"I found that topics such as time management, successful meetings, character profiling, and effective decision-making helped to build focus and prioritisation, and are effective techniques during management of any process," said Tony Charlton, Information Systems Officer, ICTD/UNHQ, and programme participant.

E-learning modules, powered by the UN Skillport, reinforce the programme by covering UN-specific topics such as procurement, contract administration, budgeting, and ICT governance. In addition, workshop assignments and coaching sessions provided trainees with an opportunity to put knowledge acquired in the programme to practical use.

Most importantly, the programme teaches mid-level managers to think differently and implement a defined model for leading and driving a CITS team effectively. "I now understand the rationale of both my managers and my subordinates better, and can offer a more focused, realistic contribution," said Mr. Charlton. "It showed me that ideas derived from cultural differences and personal experiences, along with your own practiced focus on problem handling, can be merged to provide an effective decision-making strategy."

Upon completion, participants receive a final assessment and a recommendation from instructors on their capacity to lead a CITS team. In fact, participants are already reaping the benefits of the skills gained in the course. "The knowledge, skills and tools acquired during the programme enabled us to assume, with confidence, new and important managerial roles and activities not only within CITS, but also within other areas of mission support. In addition, the programme gave us the opportunity to reflect, as managers and supervisors, on the importance of staff in the success of the Organisation and in our own success, be aware of our impact on them, and review our management approach as appropriate," said Jamel Chaabane, Chief IT Officer, UNIFIL.

The ICT Management Certification Programme was even

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The programme was custom tailored to meet the needs of the UN ICT staff using a "blended learning" approach, combining the following modules:

- PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner training courses including certification exam

- Skillport-powered online training courses on basic managerial skills, prior to the start of each residential session

- Two five-day residential modules focused on leadership training; held at UNLB, Brindisi at the beginning and end of the programme

- Post-workshop assignments supported by four telephone coaching sessions with mentors

- Final test

For a complete list of CITS training courses, visit **ICTD Career Development website at http://www.cits-training.unlb.org**

For further information on training contact **Franca Vinci, Training Coordinator, vinci@un.org**

acknowledged in the Secretary-General's 21 December 2010 "Report on the progress of training in peacekeeping" (A/65/644). Due to the overall success of the pilot programme, ICTD will deliver a second round of the programme beginning in first quarter 2012. The programme has been refined to address key managerial competencies, as identified by previous participants. In addition, the programme will include a 360° profile assessment for participants. "Being a leader is a great step forward for CITS personnel from a career standpoint, but also protects institutional knowledge, and ensures that we have the most effective personnel into the future," said Mr. Sanchez.