# UNICC

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## 2020

international computing centre | ICT SOLUTIONS FOR THE UN FAMILY

# Director's Introduction

2020 was a special year for everyone, and for UNICC it was the year of breaking many paradigms. It was the first year of the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the onset of the unprecedented international COVID-19 crisis, our 50th anniversary and the year when we decided to publish the Director's Report annually.

This UNICC Director's Report, which I am pleased to introduce, presents UNICC's highlights in 2020, from the challenges faced during the COVID-19 emergency to the opportunities it provided to the organization to serve the UN family through technology. We managed to meet some ground-breaking milestones during such a difficult year, redefining the direction the organization will take in the coming years. I am particularly grateful for the hard work and dedication of all my UNICC colleagues, our Management Committee (MC) and all our Partners, User Organizations and stakeholders.

In 2020 we all had to learn how to cope and live under the unprecedented circumstances brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, including lockdowns in almost all countries, an unforeseen situation that no one could have imagined would last for over a year. In March 2020, UNICC moved to a 100% working-from-home policy, and a year later we are still working remotely. The organization has remained resilient, agile, creative, and continues promoting, more than ever, the use of shared digital technology across the UN system.

Even though all of our offices remain virtually empty, our services continue to be secure and trustworthy, cost-efficient and benefiting from economies of scale. Our personnel continue providing state-of-the-art technologies and tools to our clients, so they can reach the most vulnerable in the field, leaving no one behind and making the impact of the SDGs more tangible. All our Partners and User Organizations have received uninterrupted services and we have solidified their trust in our know-how and our understanding that technology is a great enabler and equaliser.

We at UNICC understood from very early on that the COVID-19 crisis would permeate all spheres of our lives. Senior Management and I, as the Director, have regularly informed and continue to update all the staff and other personnel about UNICC's evolving policies to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. We took the mental well-being of all our colleagues very seriously and developed special measures to manage, as much as possible, a healthy work-life harmony. I cannot stress enough how thankful I am to all my colleagues who have gone the extra mile to remain focused on our work and our mandate during these trying times.

During 2020, UNICC redoubled its focus on the SDGs with a special emphasis on SDG 3: Good health and well-being, SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 9: Industrial, innovation and infrastructure and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals, in line with the UN Secretary-General's Strategy on New Technologies. We continue our effort to map all our projects to specific SDGs to further measure our impact and offer better metrics to our Partners and User Organizations.

In partnership with leading private sector companies like Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, Hyperledger, the Cloud Security Alliance and ServiceNow among many strategic vendors, UNICC fulfilled its mandate to its fullest and provided secure, reliable, innovative and cost-efficient services to the UN system, as recognised by the 67 organizations that we offered services to in 2020.

I am also thankful for the support of the UNICC Management Committee and its Advisory Group, especially Enrica Porcari and Anthony O'Mullane, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the MC respectively, who provided sage advice and good guidance over this unique and challenging year.

"In 2020, we saw how fast the world can change. With technology as the great enabler of humanitarianism, UNICC's experience can help the UN community leverage partnerships to outpace and outsmart the challenges we face and open up a future of self-reliance for the people we serve."

Enrica Porcari, CIO and Director of Technology, United Nations World Food Programme

With this report we hope to capture a snapshot of UNICC in 2020, its services and its unique capabilities as the shared services and digital solutions provider for the UN system. We hope you will find it as inspiring as it is for all of us in UNICC to look back at 2020.

Truly yours,

**Sameer Chauhan**
Director, UNICC

# UNICC in Brief

**1970**
Created by UNGA

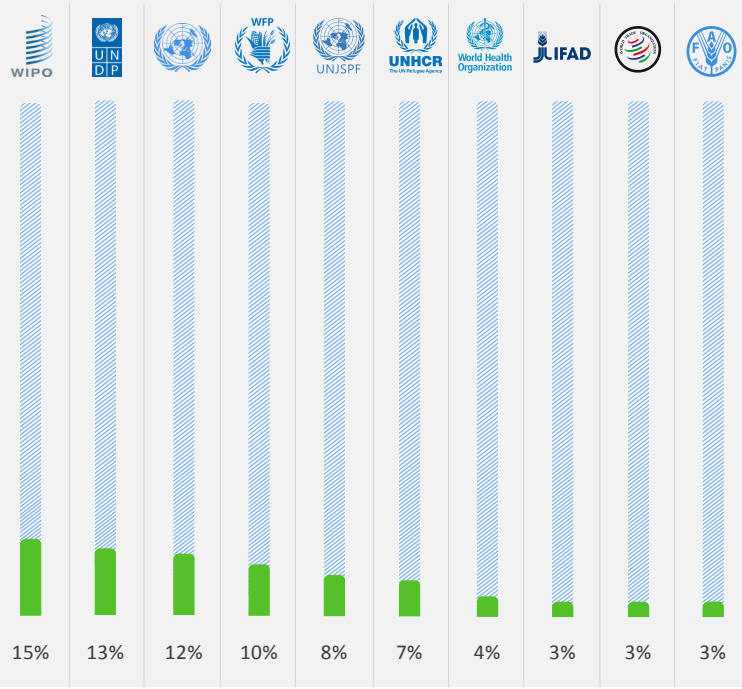
**50**
Years of experience

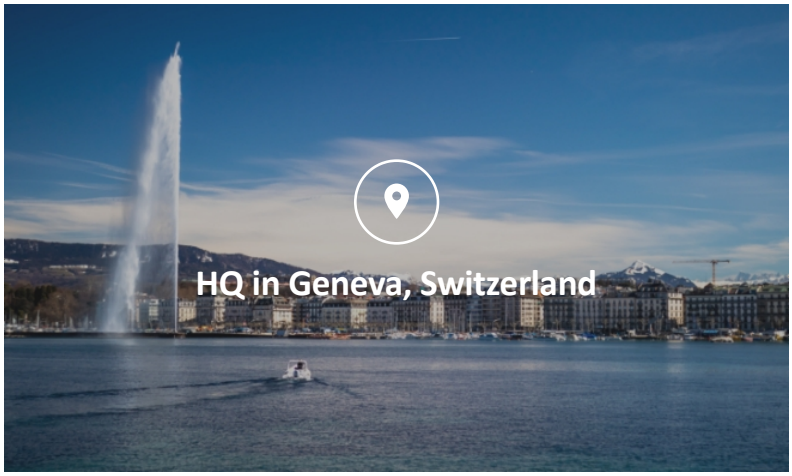
**45**
Shared services

**67**
Partners and User Organizations

**5**
Offices around the world

**Top Ten Partner Organizations**






World Health Organization
UN
UNDP

**Founding Organizations**

# HR Highlights 2020

## Top Ten Nationalities

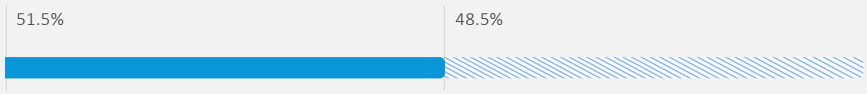
| 64 staff | 57 staff | 20 staff | 20 staff | 18 staff | 8 staff | 8 staff | 5 staff | 5 staff | 5 staff | 67 staff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spain | Italy | France | USA | India | Philippines | Portugal | Canada | Mexico | UK | 39 Nationalities |

## Staff and Consultants

**UNICC's offices**

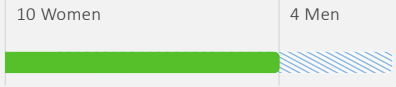
| | |
|---|---|
| Valencia (217) | 41% |
| Geneva (77) | 14% |
| Brindisi (77) | 14% |
| New York (57) | 11% |
| Other (93) | 17% |
| Rome (17) | 3% |

277 Staff 261 Consultants



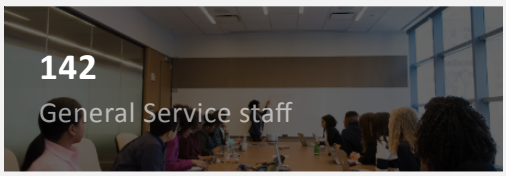

**Interns**

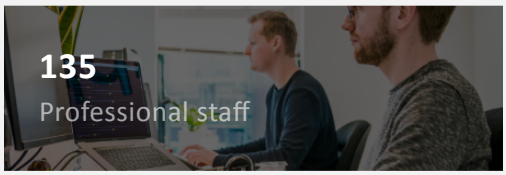
Women Men

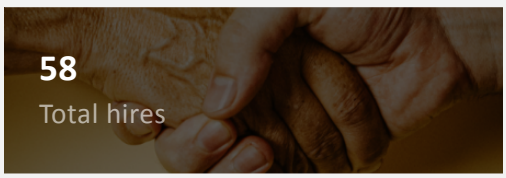


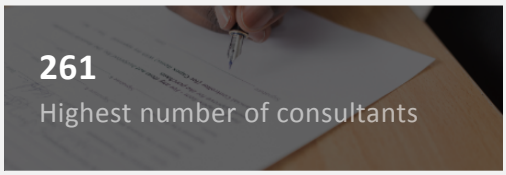

**Staff and Consultants**

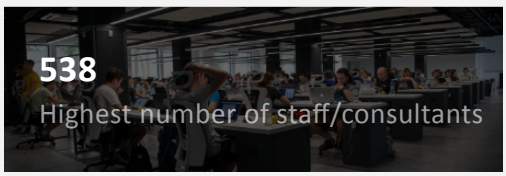
Women Men

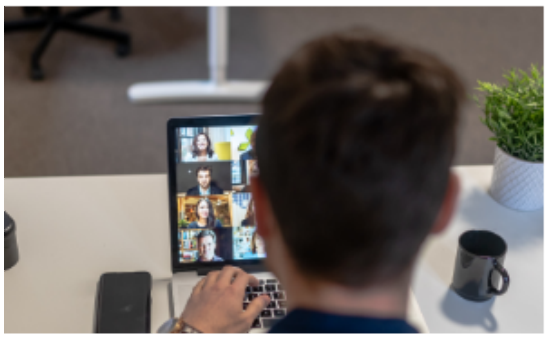




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Photos: UNICC/Unsplash/Freepik

Icons: Flaticon/Google Fonts

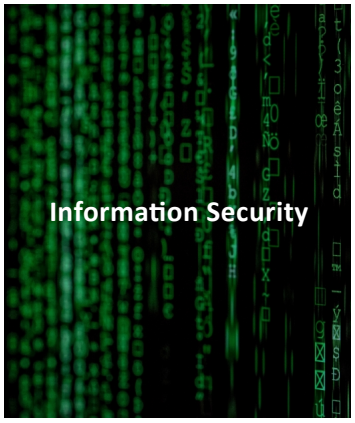
# UNICC at a Glance

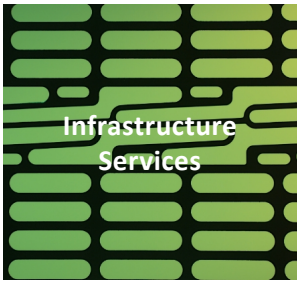
## 2020 Highlights

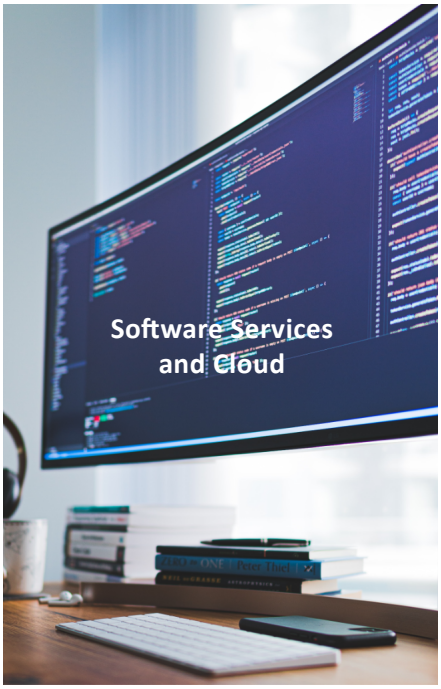
**6** New Clients **57** Partners **10** User Organizations **3** Meetings of MC

## Certifications

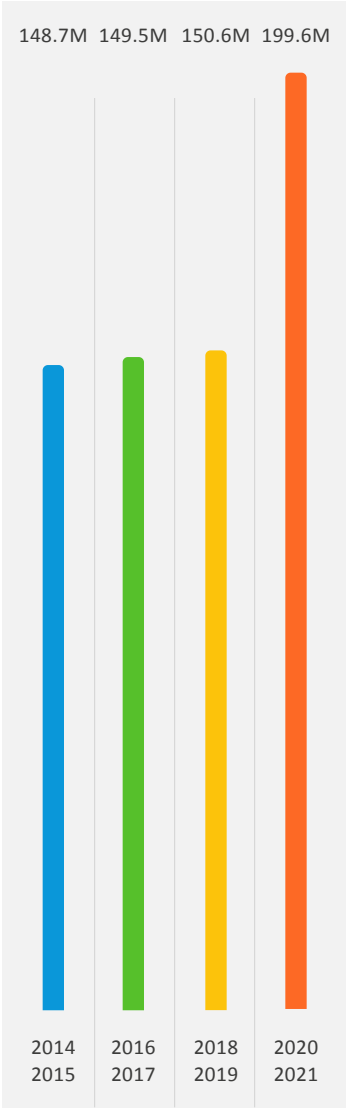
## Services



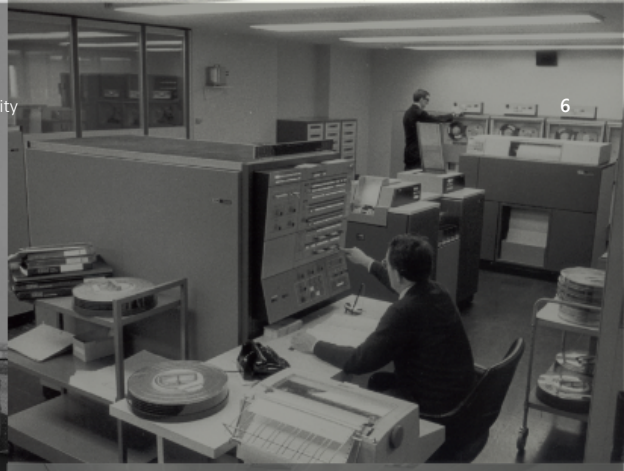


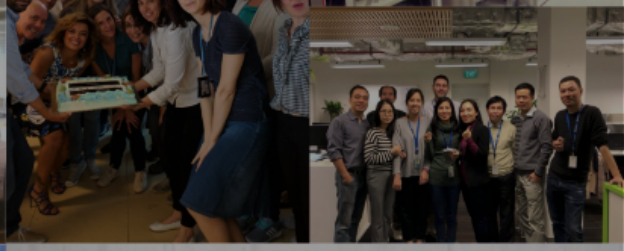



## Budget (USD)



# Historical Background





UNICC was created in 1971 by a Memorandum of Agreement between the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). In line with General Assembly resolution 2741 (XXV) of 17 December 1970, UNICC was born as an inter-organizational body to provide a common electronic data processing (EDP) facility. **On 17 December 2020, UNICC celebrated its 50th anniversary and launched a year of celebration with multiple events throughout 2021**.

UNICC established back in 1971 a hosting agreement with WHO, which also provided UNICC's first data centre. The General Assembly resolution and the initial agreement between the three founding organizations explicitly encouraged other UN Agencies to join the newly born inter-Agency structure.

During the 1980's, UNICC provided mainframe services to its growing number of Partner and User Organizations. Low speed lines between UNICC and its Partners' premises were mostly used as dedicated links for accessing UNICC's mainframe system.

In the following decade, UN organizations began to deploy Local Area Networks (LANs) and by the middle of the 1990's, UNICC installed an Internet gateway. Access to the Internet was initially provisioned through the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), with an initial access bandwidth of 64 Kilobytes per second (KBps). In 1995, UNICC started offering Internet access as well as Gopher and World Wide Web (www) hosting services; UNICC also installed a messaging hub which allowed clients to exchange emails.

UNICC expanded its global footprint to include client-facing offices in New York, USA, in 1995 and in Rome, Italy, in 1999. UNICC opened operational Centres of Excellence in Brindisi, Italy, in 2002 and in Valencia, Spain, in 2012, after signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Department of Field Support (DFS) – now called Department of Operational Support (DOS) – for the use of office space and data centre facilities in the United Nations Support Base (UNSB) premises.

UNICC has grown from an inter-Agency organization of three members to 67 in 2020. A once small organization with a limited number of staff supporting mainframe computers, infrastructure, networking, storage and computing has grown to over 530 staff and consultants by the end of 2020, supporting an entire spectrum of reliable digital services driven by best practices, offering world class technology, state-of-the-art infrastructure and a system-wide, cross-domain experience of knowledge and data, enabling clients to achieve their SDG mandates through accelerated digital delivery.

UNICC's portfolio now covers more than 67 Partners and User Organizations in the UN system and related international organizations, providing more than 45 trusted services and digital business solutions in five strategic locations around the world: Brindisi, Geneva, New York, Rome and Valencia. UNICC is a full cost-recovery organization.

More details about UNICC's history by scanning the QR code

1970
Created by UNGA

50
Years of experience

5
Offices around the world

67
Partners and User Organizations

45
Shared services

1960s
Beginnings of ICT in the UN

UNICC is born
1970

1980s
More Agencies join UNICC

1990s
UNICC offers Internet access

Organizations deploy LANs & PCs arrive
1990s

UNICC opens office in New York, USA
1995

1999
UNICC arrives in Rome, Italy

Y2K Millennium transition
1999

2002
UNICC lands in Brindisi, Italy

UNICC supports enterprise resource planning
2006

2012
UNICC opens office in Valencia, Spain

UNICC receives international certifications
2013

2017
UNICC wins CSO50 information security award

UNICC establishes a presence in Hanoi, Vietnam
2018

2018
Spanish Government contributes to the UNICC Centre of Excellence in Valencia

UNICC launches digital transformation plan
2018

2020
First virtual Management Committee

UNICC wins CSO50 information security award
2020

2020
UNICC celebrates 50th anniversary

And more to come!
2021

# Governance

Photo: ICJ

# Governance

UNICC is governed by a Management Committee (MC) comprised of one representative from each of its Partner Organizations. All Partners, 57 by the end of 2020, share responsibility for key decisions, providing guidance in devising UNICC's strategic direction and approving the Centre's budget, financial reports and service rates. 2020 was special in many ways, and the MC also had to adjust to the new ways of working. Both MC meetings, in Spring (April) and in Fall (October), were held fully virtually for the very first time. The MC also met for an ad-hoc session on cyber security, a topic that has grown in prominence during the COVID-19 crisis.

The Advisory Group, a subset of the MC members, work throughout the year with UNICC's Director to undertake preliminary work on topics of interest, to provide advice on MC agendas and to make recommendations on items presented for MC decision. The Advisory Group is composed of the MC representatives of the top five financial contributors to UNICC and one to three additional MC members suggested by the Chair of the MC and endorsed by the MC members, and is chaired by the Chair of the MC.

In 2019, UNICC established the MC Audit Sub-Group as an advisory and oversight body, independent from UNICC management, reporting to the MC. The UNICC MC Audit Sub-Group is tasked with an advisory and oversight role to assist the MC in fulfilling its obligations in financial reporting, audit and assurance processes, system of internal controls, compliance with applicable regulations and risk management. The MC Audit Sub-Group is composed of at least three and a maximum of five members nominated and appointed by the MC from its membership, based on the interest and expertise of the members. The MC Audit Sub-Group members serve impartially in their personal capacity and in the interest of the MC.

More details about UNICC's governance by scanning the QR code

## Management Committee

- Meets twice a year
- Membership: CIOs/IT Directors of Partner Organizations
- Makes key policy decisions
- Chair elected every year (usually serves 2 years)

## UNICC Director

- Chief Executive
- Appointed by UN Secretary-General
- Accountable to Management Committee
- Responsible for operational management
- Defines UNICC's strategy
- Member of the Advisory Group

## Advisory Group

- 5 members (top Partners)
- 1-3 elected members
- Chair of the MC
- Director of UNICC
- Assists the MC Chair and UNICC Director in preparing the meetings of the MC and makes appropriate recommendations on agenda items

# Financial Overview

# Financial Overview

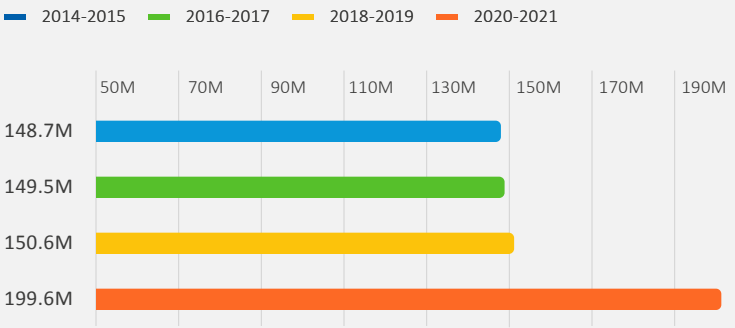
UNICC started the year with a very strong footing. I was confirmed in December 2019 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as UNICC Director, sending a strong signal to all the Partners and User Organizations that UNICC will continue implementing the measures introduced in 2019, making the organization more nimble and able. This translated into never-before-seen numbers of signed contracts and the highest organizational budget approved by the Management Committee (MC) for the financial biennium of 2020-2021.

The previous record of the organization was 338 contracts signed in 2019. In 2020 UNICC experienced a further increase in projects and services provided to the UN system and it reached a milestone of nearly 500 projects signed (497 to be exact) in a single financial year. As a result, projects' income increased by 72% and currently represents 22% of UNICC's total income, compared to 14% of the income for the same period in 2019.

This was in part due to the unique COVID-19 crisis and the exceptional challenges all UN Agencies faced, resulting in a continuing increase in the demand for UNICC services. To minimise any potential impact of COVID-19 on the expenses and revenues, the organization's management reacted quickly to develop and implement cost control measures like renegotiating contract renewals with strategic suppliers.

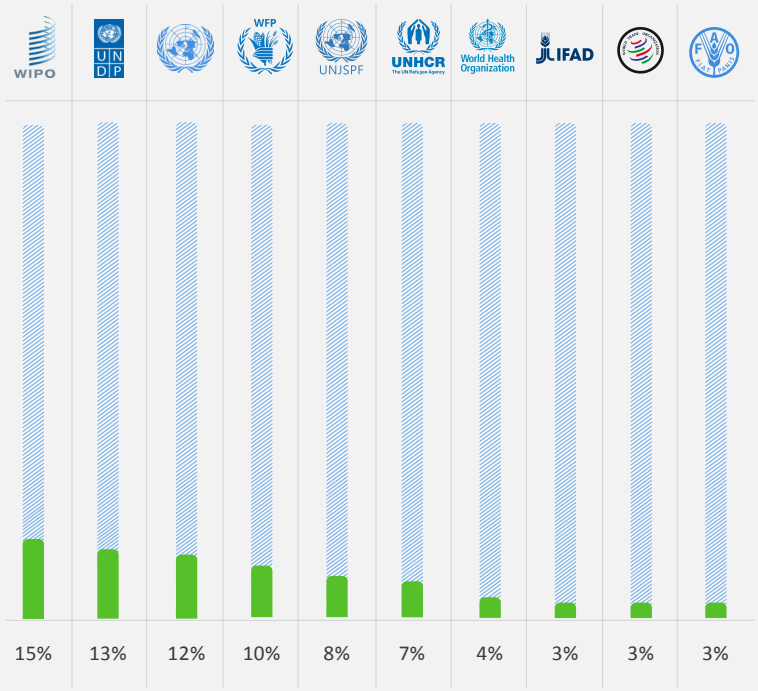
One challenge that has become apparent is related to the drop in the US dollar (USD) exchange rate. Since May 2020, expenses are 9% higher than if they had to be paid in euro and 7% if they had to be paid in Swiss franc. The organization only hedges exchange rates to staff costs and fixes them one year upfront. Such unexpected cost increases continue to be closely monitored.

**Budget (USD)**




**Top Ten Partner Organizations**

In 2020, the top ten Partner Organizations by funding contributions to UNICC, through its cost-recovery system, are WIPO, UNDP, UN, WFP, UNJSPF, UNHCR, WHO, IFAD, WTO and FAO.



# Highlights of 2020

# COVID-19 Crisis and UNICC's Response

2020 was a year like no other. The COVID-19 pandemic completely disrupted the professional and personal aspects of life, but UNICC was able to act nimbly without sacrificing creativity and innovation.

First, the UNICC Crisis Management Team (CMT) was established on 26 February 2020 with representatives from all offices and from Human Resources. The CMT initiated a 100% teleworking test on 28 February 2020 with very successful results. Minor issues and technical challenges were resolved to ensure 100% of staff and non-staff could telework. Local Essential Staff (LES), staff who may be required to go physically into the office for technical, business or operational reasons, were also identified in each location. UNICC was therefore able to respond rapidly to the evolving threat of COVID-19. By 10 March, the organization switched to 60% of staff teleworking, and by 16 March the transition was complete with 100% of staff teleworking.

During the month of March, while planning for organizational and operational resiliency, UNICC teams were also asked to provide additional support to several Partners and User Organizations. Chief Information Officers (CIOs) across the UN system requested UNICC's support to enable widespread teleworking for their staff and stakeholders. While maintaining all existing services and operations, UNICC was also able to deliver on additional requested business-critical services and ensure teleworking tools and platforms to sustain an increased number of simultaneous users.

More details about UNICC's COVID-19 response by scanning the QR code

With unanticipated 100% work-from-home status for entire organizations, UNICC's Cyber Security Section supported clients whose members were working outside the corporate network infrastructure. More broadly, UNICC's cyber security team shared best practices for secure conferencing services and general cyber-health precautions.

Among other agile solutions developed by UNICC to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic was the Crisis Communications App, a centralised tool to effectively manage personnel work status including specific and changing geolocations and the distribution of critical crisis alerts and updates.

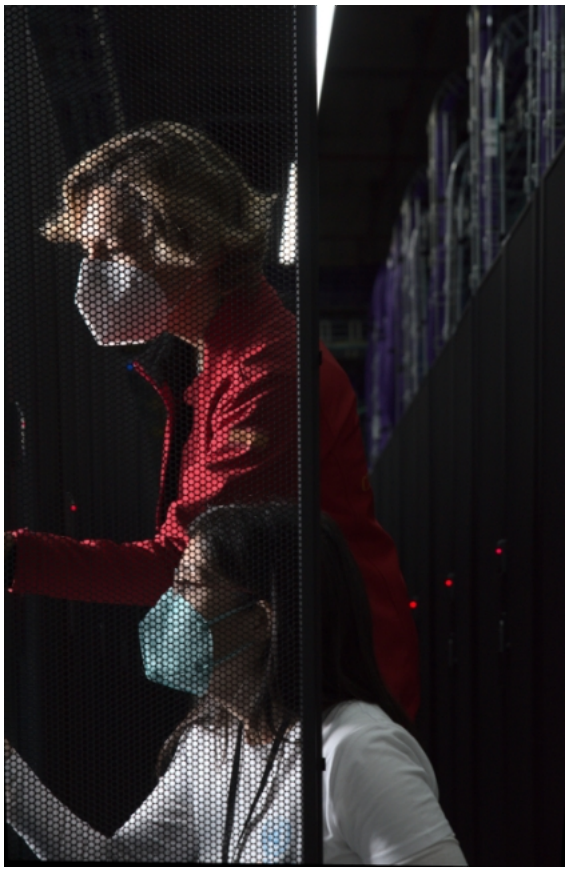
Hyperautomation was another area that sparked UNICC's clients' interest in 2020. In times of crisis, automation delivers greater operational efficiencies and allows for innovative business functions. During 2020, over 15 clients explored the benefits of UNICC's Robotic Process Automation Centre of Excellence launched in 2019.

Despite all the challenges posed by the pandemic, UNICC continued to move forward and thrive. UNICC personnel remained focused, many going the extra mile to ensure consistency and excellence in their tasks and roles. Colleagues in Brindisi and Valencia decided to leverage their own resources and skills to support their communities by printing 3D masks and valves at home to be used in hospitals. In short, the pandemic and all of its accompanying hurdles, though difficult at times, failed to dampen the spirit of UNICC and the work of its members.

Photo: UNICC/BONET

# Gender, Diversity and Inclusiveness Efforts

In 2020 I became a Gender Champion. International Gender Champions is a network of members who are women and men decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence. I signed the Panel Parity Pledge and committed to striving towards gender balance at every event to which I am invited to speak.



More details about UNICC's Gender, Diversity and Inclusiveness efforts by scanning the QR code

**Several other significant milestones during this unique and, at times, challenging year of 2020 for UNICC include:**

- UNRWA and UNICC signed a ground-breaking ICT partnership agreement to enhance opportunities for Palestinian refugees in Gaza. During 2020, UNICC onboarded eight skilled Palestinian professionals to support the digital transformation of the UN system from a variety of teams within UNICC. Read more here
- The UN Digital Solutions Centre (UN DSC) and UNICC developed Jambo, an inter-Agency phone book app that allows staff and stakeholders of over ten UN Agencies to find and connect with UN colleagues from other organizations. Read more here
- UNICC, together with the UN DSC, developed the UN Digital ID, a digital wallet for UN personnel to store personal, HR, medical, travel, security, payroll and pension data over time. The solution is already being used by the UN Pension Fund (UNJSPF), whose Digital Certificate of Entitlement allows its 80,000 beneficiaries around the world to verify their continuing eligibility through an app that leverages biometrics and blockchain. Read more here
- I participated as a panellist in the high-level event organized by the Spanish government titled "Technology at the Service of Multilateralism: Agenda 2030, Human Rights and Peace". The event was led by Ms. Cristina Gallach, Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean and former Under Secretary-General of the United Nations, Department of Communications and Public Information. Read more here
- The European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme, through the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance, contracted UNICC to assist in the development of an Early Warning and Early Response web platform and mobile app. The solution allows relevant national authorities to report risks and incidents of electoral violence and was utilised already in 2020 in the Côte d'Ivoire elections. Read more here

# Cyber Security

# Cyber Security in Time of COVID-19

As demonstrated by over a year of remote working and living through computer screens, we are completely dependent on technology to manage life as we know it. The need to consider the safety and security of online systems, networks and cyber practices is more relevant today than ever before because boundaries between home and work, private and office spaces, begin to blur. UNICC, as the specialised entity of the United Nations family for digital business solutions, remained the go-to provider for cyber security services for Partners and User Organizations during the COVID-19 crisis.

UNICC's cyber security team of more than 45 experts continued to serve over 40 Partners on a range of cyber security services like Common Secure Operations Centre (CSOC), Common Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), Common Secure threat intelligence, security awareness, CISO services, cloud security, penetration testing and security incident response.

During the COVID-19 crisis, UNICC launched an e-signature service that enables its clients to conduct business operations smoothly in remote working conditions. The Management Committee also endorsed that UNICC Partner Agencies share cyber threat intelligence through UNICC, who then distributes it within the UN system, with both Common Secure subscribers as well as non-subscribers in a secure and timely manner, through the Common Secure threat intelligence network.

Common Secure has also grown rapidly in 2020. The number of subscribers has increased to 30 Agencies and is expected to reach 35 or more by the end of 2021. Additionally, the cost of the service has dropped almost 50% thanks to efficiencies of scale. Similarly, the Common Secure Operations Centre (CSOC) that monitors for and responds to cyber threats 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, reached a subscriber base of more than a dozen Agencies. As more entities subscribe to the CSOC services, the detection and remediation of cyber threats across the UN ecosystem is enhanced through advanced correlation and automation.

In November 2020, the second annual Common Secure Conference took place entirely virtually for the first time. The Conference's aim was to bring UNICC's Partners and User Organizations together to increase trust within the UN system to share threat intelligence, cyber security best practices and provide feedback on Common Secure services. There were over 100 participants from more than 30 UN Agencies and other International Organizations, as well as panellists from the private sector and academia, with entities such as Citibank, Cyber Peace Institute, Amazon Web Services, Carnegie Mellon University, Microsoft and Purdue University, among many others.

UNICC received the CSO50 award in 2020 (and in 2017) for the Common Secure cyber security services built within the UN ecosystem. The organization maintained and renewed its ISO 27001, ISO 20000 and ISAE 3402 certifications supporting its cyber security, service management system and assurance controls practices within UNICC. Even under the duress of COVID-19, UNICC did not falter in its provision of secure, safe and trusted services.

More details about UNICC's cyber security services by scanning the QR code

# Analytics and Data Management

# Analytics and Data Management

Following a call by the UN Secretary-General to harvest and make a better use of data, UNICC's Data and Analytics service area is experiencing rapid growth. Especially during 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how critical proper data use is in protecting lives and ecosystems and how vital it is to build back better our communities. This public health crisis is a wake-up call for all to "set strategic foundations; create value with data and focus on priorities; foster enablers, nurture capabilities, and iterate" (UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy 2020-2022).

For the past few years, UNICC has been offering various data and analytics tools to direct and drive business insights. Although this service area started with core technology elements like developing and managing data warehouses, data lakes and Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards, UNICC has seen an increasing demand for services that allow our clients to adopt the key principles of the UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy. UNICC's Partners and User Organizations realised they need additional expertise in a diverse set of Data Analytics areas such as data management and governance processes, developing and maturing advanced analytics through reusable Machine Learning (ML) and algorithms, eventually leading to the ability to obtain actionable data insights, which is crucial for digital transformation of organizations.

UNICC is therefore adjusting to the needs of its Clients and has started building on its robust data services with new and relevant capabilities that can assist clients in accelerating their data maturity journey. The mission of this newly refocused Data and Analytics team is to act as a catalyst to cultivate a UN ecosystem that values and makes well-informed, data-driven decisions in line with the UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy.

*In building a whole-of-UN data ecosystem that maximizes the value of our data, we unlock our full potential: we make better decisions and deliver stronger support to people and planet – in the moment that matters most.*

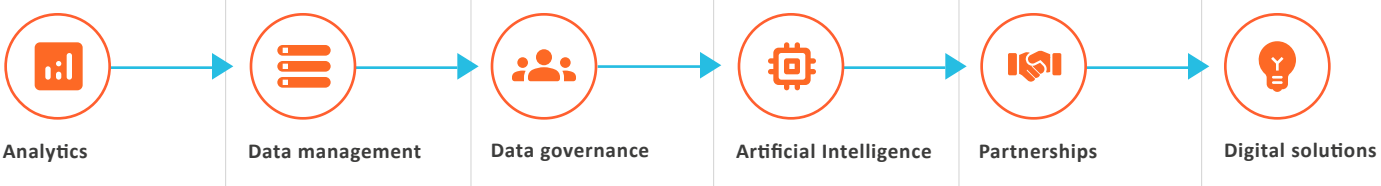
**UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy 2020-2022**

During the unique year of 2020 and under the COVID-19 crisis, the Data and Analytics team developed several projects. UNICC started providing data services to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) by making use of analytics tools such as Tableau, delivering an analytics dashboard to WIPO's HR team which enables decision-making and self-service diagnostic analytics. This service includes data exploration, preparation and cleaning, analysis and stakeholder collaboration.

In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICC built a central Azure cloud-based data lake infrastructure and corporate data golden truth repository. This NextGen data platform and services encompassed the most important corporate data sources and offers advanced on-demand self-service and data workspace capabilities to support any kind of business units or project-oriented request. It is helping to develop mature tool sets to support data management, implement advanced analytics use cases and data governance, fully tailored to address any kind of data needs. NextGen data platform will as well serve as an open data sharing portal.

UNICC developed a central data lake to store unstructured and very confidential data documents such as digital files, videos, images and audio files of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD). In addition, a data pipeline was built to enrich all metadata content by using ML and AI approaches to document translation and text analytics for Named Entity Extraction (NER) and Vision Services for video and audio insight extraction. This custom cloud-based solution allows investigators to search and classify documents among terabytes of data.

Additionally, UNICC built a central Azure cloud-based data lake infrastructure centralizing data from Procurement and Finance areas of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). This data platform supports internal and external stakeholders to build enterprise reporting and Business Intelligence. Moreover, the data analytics team is helping to develop custom BI dashboards and defining data governance.



# Innovation

# Innovation: Digital Solutions Developed in-House

As the preferred partner for the ideation, incubation and delivery of innovative digital products and solutions, UNICC is required to be at the forefront of cutting-edge technologies. The 67 Partners and User Organizations that seek services from UNICC require more than a business agreement - they want a trusted partner that enables them to utilise technology to fulfil their mission to reach those furthest behind. UNICC, with 50 years of experience in delivering custom-made digital business solutions and technologies to the UN family, has gathered a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the UN ecosystem and its technology needs and capabilities.

All UN entities, regardless of their size, require innovative and creative thinking in the way they deliver their mandate and mission to reach the most disadvantaged and alleviate their problems. Innovation is important to enable the UN system to address and resolve increasing challenges and new mandates given by the Member States to stay relevant for the next 50 years. It is important to remain cognizant and up to date with the latest technology trends, to attract and maintain bright minds in fields of new technologies, like Robotic Process Automation (RPA), Internet of Things (IoT), cyber security and data analytics. In addition, it is imperative to listen to and remain attentive of Partners and User Organizations, both through UNICC's Business Relationship Managers (BRMs) and Management Committee (MC) meetings.

Following the interest of Clients, UNICC is developing innovative digital solutions to allow diplomacy in the time of COVID-19, after the pandemic brought multilateral discussions almost to a complete standstill. UNICC is developing solutions like the UN Digital ID, a digital wallet for UN staff, as well as Digital Diplomacy tools such as e-Signature and virtual conferencing services, always with the unique needs of the UN family in mind. While there are a wide variety of platforms and tools in the market, their end-to-end user experience and the level of inherent trust they offer is unfit for the UN system's very particular requirements.

Another need UNICC has identified is a community cloud hosted in UN system premises. A UN-hosted cloud would serve as a reliable solution not only for UN entities but also for related international organizations and even UN Member States, who could benefit from hosting their data in a secure platform tailored towards the demands of the multilateral world and with UN Privileges and Immunities. UNICC is already in talks with different partners to make the UN community cloud a reality in 2021.

These digital solutions for the UN system are being developed by UNICC's skilled workforce using frontier technologies and with the greater good at the centre, drawing from the organization's core belief that technology is the great driver, enabler and equaliser.

# The Way Forward

# The Way Forward

I trust that you found this report inspiring. 2020 was truly a year like no other; it was the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which nearly brought the world to a standstill. Individually, we all overcame challenges, uncovered truths and experienced growth in unanticipated ways. This was also true for UNICC as an organization.

We welcomed more colleagues into the organization than ever before, crossing the milestone of 500 personnel (540 to be exact). Our approved budget grew to nearly 200 million USD for the 2020-2021 financial biennium. We signed a record number of 497 contracts, foreshadowing the influential projects and services to come. This growth would not have been possible without the hard work and support of our most valued asset: our personnel. To every single one of my colleagues, I want to thank you for making all this possible amid unprecedented times.

Additionally, we must thank our valued Partner Organizations, Users, and other stakeholders, they are our raison d'être and without their support UNICC would look very different today. I am also deeply grateful to the Management Committee for remaining unwavering in UNICC's mandate to provide the best and most cost-efficient digital shared services and technology solutions for the UN ecosystem. I extend a special word of thanks to Enrica Porcari and Anthony O'Mullane, respectively the Chair and Vice-Chair of the MC in 2020, for leading the organization with prudence and agency.

2020 will also be remembered as the year UNICC turned 50 years old, a remarkable achievement for a technology organization. We are more nimble than ever; we keep the Mission, Vision and Values of the organization at the front and centre, all the while prioritising initiatives in gender parity and building eco-friendly sustainable practices.

The years ahead will not be easy, we know that. We need to build back better our communities and systems. We need to listen carefully and remain open to the needs of all our Partners and User Organizations. This may look like addressing existing gaps with solutions such as the recent UN Digital ID or the UN-backed e-Signature. But filling gaps will not be enough.

We must go further and develop platforms that are not only UN-centred but also serve all actors of the multilateral system and humanitarian world. With this in mind, we are currently developing a Digital Diplomacy platform that will allow intergovernmental meetings to be as smooth as possible, without compromising user-friendliness, linguistic accessibility and security. We will develop a much-needed UN Cloud that enjoys the Privileges and Immunities of the UN system and proves to be reliable, efficient, secure and cost effective.

We will continue growing and grounding our cyber security services to better face future cyber attacks and better protect Common Secure subscribers. Harvesting and analysing our data and that of our clients are prerequisites to making informed decisions and to design the cutting-edge tools needed to confront tomorrow's challenges. The world is ever-changing, and we must evolve with it; by understanding the sea of data we sit on in the UN system, we will be able to better understand how to reach the most disadvantaged in our societies.

I am ever confident that this decade, the Decade of Action to accelerate the achievements and delivery of the SDGs by 2030, will also be the decade of sustainable technology, the great enabler and equaliser of society.

Truly yours,
Sameer Chauhan

ICC
international
computing
centre
ICT SOLUTIONS
FOR THE
UN FAMILY
50
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY