1 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland - UNITAR hosted a lunch with UN Women, and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Geneva, engaging key actors from International Geneva and from the Arab region to discuss and explore areas of collaboration to empower and promote the role of women in managing crises in the Arab region.

The working lunch took place at the Restaurant des Délégués of the Palais des Nations. As host and chair, UNITAR Executive Director, Mr. Nikhil Seth opened by emphasizing the important role partnerships play in ensuring gender responsive policies, particularly related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. His opening remarks were followed by H.E. Mr. Sameh Aboul Enein, Permanent Representative of League of Arab States to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva and Mr. Mohammed Naciri, UN Women Regional Director of Arab States. H.E. Ms. Pamela Hamamoto, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva, Ms. Corinne Momal-Vanian, Director, Conference Management, United Nations Office at Geneva and Mr. Mohammed Ali Alnsour, Chief of Middle East and North Africa Branch of the Field Operations and
Technical Cooperation Division, OHCHR, discussed and identified priority areas for cooperation to empower and promote women’s leadership in the Arab region. The group’s discussion highlighted the rate of progress of women’s rights in the Middle East, the increasing vulnerability of female refugees in the Arab region and the actions taken to tackle this vulnerability, which emphasized the critical role of women in doing so. The group agreed that further efforts and resources are required if women in the region are to be empowered to lead in times of crises.

In 2015, UNITAR and the UN Women Training Center committed to strengthening their cooperation in the field of capacity building and women’s empowerment by signing a strategic 3-year Memorandum of Understanding which commits the two organizations to work together towards the implementation of a joint Women’s Leadership Programme which, since its launch in May 2015, has delivered events in Geneva and New York, reaching over 250 beneficiaries. Furthermore, UNITAR is building upon a longstanding cooperation with the League of Arab States, partnering on activities that are cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary, covering areas such as peace and security, multilateral negotiation, and women’s empowerment.