# Board of Trustees

Fifty-Ninth Session

29 – 30 November 2018                    UNITAR/BT/59/6

**25 January 2019**                    **Geneva, Switzerland**

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

1.  The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) convened in Abuja, Nigeria from 29 to 30 November 2018 for its Fifty-Ninth Session. A list of the session's main conclusions and recommendations, as orally adopted at the end of the session, is attached as Annex I.

2.  The following members of the Board were present or represented at the session:

**Trustees:**

Mr. Chibuike Amaechi

Ms. Diana Chávez

Dr. Sarah Cook

Ms. Taous Feroukhi (Chair)

Mr. Gennady Gatilov
Represented by Mr. Alexie Shebarshin and in his absence Mr. Yuriy Spirin, Designated Alternates

Ms. Terhi Hakala

Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan

Dr. Deisi Kusztra

Mr. Vijay Kunhianandan Nambiar
Represented by Mr. B. N. Reddy, Designated Alternate

Dr. Yukie Osa

Dr. Patti Phillips

Mr. Valentin Zellweger
Represented by Mr. Georg Steiner, Designated Alternate

**Ex Officio**:

Mr. Nikhil Seth, Assistant Secretary-General, Executive Director, UNITAR

**Secretary of the Board:**

Mr. Brook Boyer, UNITAR

**Observers – UNITAR:**

Mr. Larry Boms, Head, Nigeria Project Office
Ms. Marina I. Dinca Vasilescu, Director, Division for Operations (via Skype call)
Ms. Ana Figueira, Personal Assistant, Office of the Executive Director
Ms. Emily Fraser, Special Assistant, Office of the Executive Director
Mr. Alex Mejia, Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion
Ms. Ihuoma Njemanze, Fellow, Nigeria Project Office
Mr. Joel Thalla, Chief, Finance and Budget Unit (via Skype call)

3.   Under item 1, Opening of the session, the Chair welcomed the trustees and extended a particularly warm welcome to the four new trustees who the Secretary-General appointed in 2018: Her Excellency Ms. Terhi Hakala, Dr. Deisi Kusztra, Dr. Patti Phillips and His Excellency Mr Gennedy Gatilov. The Chair announced that the Board had constituted quorum with 12 of 15 members present or represented. In accordance with the Board's rules of procedure, the Chair extended full powers to the designated representatives of those members who had notified the secretariat of their absence. The Chair acknowledged with appreciation the Federal Government of Nigeria and in particular Mr. Chibuike Amaechi for the generous support in hosting the session in Abuja. The Executive Director also extended his appreciation to Minister Amaechi for his generosity and reviewed various highlights since the Fifty-Eighth Session, including the alignment of UNITAR's work to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework and the new organizational structure. He referred to the 8.2 per cent budget growth over the past biennium and the increase in number of beneficiaries, as well as efforts to modernize programming and operations. **The Board took note of the introductory remarks.**

4.   Under item 2, Adoption of the agenda, the Chair introduced the provisional agenda as proposed by the Executive Director in accordance with the Board's rules of procedure. **The Board adopted the agenda as proposed.**

5.   Under item 3, Organization of work, the Chair proposed that the Board conduct its business according to the schedule in the item's annotation. **The Board agreed and adopted the organization of work.**

6.   Under item 4, Membership matters, the Chair announced that the Secretary-General had appointed two new trustees to the Board and that the secretariat had circulated their respective bio notes. The Chair also announced that Her Excellency Ms. Marta Maurás Perez, His Excellency Mr. Alexey Borodavkin, His Excellency Mr. Carsten Staur, His Excellency Mr. Ma Zhaoxu and Ms. Cathleen Cravero Kristoffersson had completed their terms and expressed her deep appreciation for their commitment and contribution to the Board. **The Board welcomed the new trustees and expressed its deep appreciation to the outgoing members for their commitment and dedication to UNITAR and the Board.**

7. Under item 5, Implementation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework, the Chair recalled that the Board welcomed the framework at the Fifty-Eighth Session, which Management produced taking into consideration the UNITAR We Want and Six-point Vision documents, as well as inputs from various UNITAR stakeholders. In referring to the update of the framework's implementation contained in the Board's documentation, the Executive Director highlighted the Six-point Vision as a frame of reference for reviewing progress and particularly the vision's elements of growth, modernization, innovation, quality, visibility and transparency. On growth, he indicated that while aggregate financial and beneficiary figures were positive, they were very disparate across programming areas. On modernization, innovation and quality, the Executive Director referenced a newly-created innovation lab and recent programming developments in the field of virtual and augmented reality, and that the Quality Assurance Framework continued to be applied. He noted that more progress was needed, including promoting a culture of sharing information across divisions and better understanding in which contexts new learning technologies should be used. He also noted progress in automating information flows from an administrative perspective. The Executive Director noted the challenges in strengthening visibility given the Institute's size, noting that this area was very much work in progress and that and that efforts need to continue to ensure that UNITAR is recognized as being the best in business in the field of training. Finally, he indicated steps taken to improve transparency to both donors and beneficiaries.

8. The Chair expressed satisfaction with the Executive Director's assessment and recognized concrete progress. The Board made a number of observations, including the importance of the framework being aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); that gender training should not only target female beneficiaries but also male beneficiaries and that a better gender balance was required not only for developing but also for developed country beneficiaries; that UNITAR was visible in some regions, such as the Pacific, as a result of the programming delivered by the UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT); the importance of context in developing content and drawing on experts from academia to enhance learning methods through partnerships with universities; and that impact stories are useful and can help raise the visibility of the Institute. In reference to the holistic and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, it was noted that UNITAR should not lose sight of the transversal, crosscutting dimension in reporting on the implementation of the framework, with examples being gender and beneficiary affiliation related to programming across all areas as opposed to being reported pillar by pillar. **The Board took note of the observations made and the update on the implementation of the 2018–2021 Strategic Framework, and commended Management for the alignment of programming to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

9. Under item 6, Programming and reporting, the Chair referred to sub-item 6a, Programme Performance Report for the Biennium 2016-2017, the 2017 Results Report and Key Performance Indicators, as contained in the Board's documentation. Mr. Brook Boyer, Director for Strategic Planning and Performance, introduced the reports. In reviewing the 2016-2017 biennium, he noted that most outcome and output areas were achieved (or surpassed). With regard to trained beneficiaries, he reported that the actual number of beneficiaries was twice the number planned, and that this was due largely to the outreach of the UN CC:Learn e-course on climate change, peacekeeping training and beneficiaries from the Global Network of International Training Centres for Authorities and Leaders (CIFAL). He indicated that 83 per cent of learning-related beneficiaries came from developing countries and 50 per cent from countries in special situations, including the least-developed countries (LDCs), the small island developing States (SIDS) and the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). He also drew the Board's attention to the alignment of results to the 2030 Agenda and that while most planned beneficiaries were achieved or surpassed, only about a third resulted from programming with strong links to the relevant SDG when taking into consideration the indicator targets. He also reviewed other figures presented in the report and the various key performance indicator (KPI) values from 2017, including e.g. beneficiary outreach, gender ratio, beneficiary feedback, and the application of knowledge and skills. Trustees put forth various comments, questions and suggestions, including the need to consider adjusting indicator targets on beneficiary reaction, leveraging adaptive testing, collecting data from non-learning outcome-related programming and criticality of knowledge to job success, learning from the delivery of e-Learning courses and adapting content to local contexts, and adding variables in reporting disaggregated data. In the context of the 2030 Agenda and noting how onerous reporting can be, the Executive Director asked the Board to what degree UNITAR should disaggregate data. Including a small number of additional variables, such as age and disabilities, was considered to

be useful, particularly given the inclusive nature of the 2030 Agenda. **The Board took note of the observations made, the 2016-2017 Programme Performance Report, the 2017 Results Report and the Key Performance Indicators. The Board requested Management to include age and disabilities in the disaggregated data in future reports.**

10. Under sub-item 6b, Fit-for-purpose: UNITAR programming and frontier issues, the Chair recalled the Board's discussions at its Fifty-Eighth Session on the importance for UNITAR to take into consideration the rapidly changing world and how technological advances such as virtual reality and augmented reality are being incorporated into UNITAR programming. The Executive Director emphasized the opportunities that technology and frontier issues present given the Institute's focus on knowledge and learning. Referring to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, he indicated that the ways in which we interact, consume and solve problems will be challenged, and that technology would impact all pillars of the UN's work on peace and security, human rights and on sustainable development. UNITAR also needed to work to level the playing field so that all Member States can participate meaningful in international debates on the topic. The Executive Director made reference to the strategic framework's call to optimize technology, including geo-spatial technologies, for evidence-based decisions and to equip institutions to improve the quality of learning opportunities. He indicated that the Secretary-General is committed to deepening the UN's internal capacities and exposure to these new technologies, and that UNITAR needs to rethink its training offer, how it trains and facilities learning, and how it can leverage technology in order to reach more beneficiaries and more effectively, evaluate better and forge new partnerships.

11. Trustees found the report on frontier issues to be relevant and important as new technologies will have a great impact on training and education in the future, and expressed much satisfaction that the Institute is preparing to seize the opportunities that these technologies bring, both in terms of supporting UNITAR's capacity to deliver and to inform and raise awareness of stakeholders of their benefits and potential threats. It was suggested that a systematic inclusion of these reflections in the various aspects of UNITAR's work is important rather than developing a strategy, and that partnerships with entities outside the UN and in particular with the private and academic sectors would be important to further innovate and reduce the high costs of incorporating such technologies and approaches into programming. In order to promote cooperation with the private sector, it was suggested to frame the issues to be addressed under the umbrella of corporate governance or cyber security. It was also suggested to invest in communicating UNITAR's unique brand to attract contributions from, and conclude partnerships with, relevant actors. The importance of not only working to help reduce the digital divide but also ensuring that ethical issues in relation to the Internet are addressed was also raised. Referring to the regulatory environment and the potential wide use of such technologies, the ongoing work of the UN High-Level Panel on Technology was mentioned. It was noted that the issues are highly complicated and that there are existing learning opportunities e.g. the University of Helsinki offering a free e-Learning course on artificial intelligence. **The Board took note of the observations made and the note on Fit-for-Purpose: UNITAR Programming and Frontier Issues. The Board endorsed the following specific recommendations for Management:**
    - **Develop a learning module on ethics and the Internet;**
    - **Consider developing training programmes based on the recommendations of the digital Cooperation Panel, once issued;**
    - **Modernize learning programmes and mainstream the use of applicable technologies in UNITAR's programming;**
    - **Develop partnerships with the academic and business sectors, including larger companies, to develop relevant training programmes, and support small and medium sized enterprises in the field of cybersecurity; and**
    - **Continue to use virtual reality, 3D and other innovations for learning and continue to deliver the modules in multilateral diplomacy. In the area of big data, explore how partnerships with companies that are the repositories of big data can be developed for the benefit of countries in special situations, together with UN partners, for example.**

12. Under sub-item 6c, Education and Training for those Furthest Behind in Africa, the Chair noted that over 50 per cent of UNITAR learners have come from African countries. The Executive Director reviewed some facts and figures from the status report, noting that 2018 learning-related programming through October has reached 4,200 beneficiaries from 37 countries in special

situations in Africa. He also reviewed various events held in Africa, including events organized under the Peace, People, Planet and Prosperity pillars, in addition to the crosscutting Agenda 2030 unit; the Durban-based CIFAL Centre; and activities/programming delivered through the Nairobi-based UNOSAT Learning Centre and the Nigeria Project Office in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He invited trustees to provide insights on the demand side of training in Africa, noting that the business model of UNITAR required a balance with the supply side.

13. Trustees made a number of observations, noting that the driving forces in Africa stem largely from its demography, resources and investments in capacity. One of the main challenges is how to improve the coordination of expertise across sectors. In the specific field of training, areas of concern include how to optimize training effectiveness. Rather than focus on the training of individuals, it would be worthy to invest in institution-based training and ensure that those trained are actually deployed in the areas in which they have been trained, ensure that knowledge acquired is being applied and that training triggers employability. It was emphasized that those requiring training need to be targeted as opposed to training for the sake of training. In order to help people benefit from training in their specific environments, it was also recommended to set very clear goals; create added value that is understandable and relevant; and to monitor, follow-up and and learn from lessons, including both successes and failures. The Executive Director reflected on various programmes, including in the fields of health and youth employability. **The Board took note of its discussions and the note on Education and Training for Those Furthest Behind in Africa. The Board noted in particular:**
    - **The changing demographics in Africa and the need for UNITAR to give priority to programmes for promoting opportunities for job creation and employability;**
    - **The need to promote enhanced coordination, including multi-stakeholder coordination; and for working to strengthen institutional capacity development, including through training of trainer approaches, with the aim to reach more individuals in need of learning;**
    - **From a thematic perspective, explore health-related areas in programming; and**
    - **To have clear goals, ensure added value for people and consistently monitor, evaluate, review and make the shifts for activities to become more relevant.**

14. Under sub-item 6d, Results from recent evaluations and lessons learned, the Chair announced that the Board considered at its Fifty-Eighth Session a number of challenges and lessons to be learned in addition to programming highlights, and emphasized the accountability and learning functions of evaluation. Mr. Brook Boyer, Director for Strategic Planning and Performance, provided a review of evaluative undertakings since the Fifty-Eighth Session, including three independent evaluations (UNITAR Afghanistan Fellowship Programme, the World Heritage Training Series and the UNOSAT Rapid Mapping Service) and one review (Interface between the UNITAR Back-office Services and Programme Units). He also informed the Board that two additional evaluations were pending finalization, including the Evaluation of the Sustaining Peace in Mali and the Sahel Region through Strengthening Peacekeeping Training Capacities (Phase II) and the Cluster Evaluation on UNITAR Training of Trainer Initiatives, and that two evaluations would be launched at the outset of 2019 (Evaluation of the Global Network of CIFAL Centres and the Baseline Evaluation of the Common Sensing Project), in addition to a mid-term review of the 2018-2019 Strategic Framework to be undertaken in the third-fourth quarter of 2019. He reviewed some of the key findings under the various evaluation criteria used to assess the projects/programmes and highlighted several crosscutting lessons to be learned e.g. maintaining project-related documentation, data and information was critical for monitoring progress towards results and accurate narrative reporting; sustained partner engagement in programming required the necessary time investment; national ownership was important to contextualize content to local circumstances and for sustaining results beyond project closure; and that gender and women empowerment strategies incorporated into the design phase is a key factor for the successful implementation of projects aiming to contribute to SDG 5 on gender equality and women empowerment. He concluded the presentation by reviewing some of the challenges in the field of evaluation, including limited financial and human resources, variable buy-in from divisions and promoting a learning culture to inform evidence-based decisions.

15. Trustees raised a number of questions and observations, including what criteria are used for the selection of evaluations, how the sustainability criterion is assessed, how evaluations are used to promote learning, and what time is ripe for engaging in an exit strategy. The Director noted that revised Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework approved by the Board mandates an

independent evaluation for projects budgeted at $1.5 million and above and that other independent evaluations may be undertaken at the request of programme management and/or at the discretion of the Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit within its budget appropriation. On sustainability, he noted that in most instances, sustainability assesses the likelihood that results will endure beyond the conclusion of the project, although the UNOSAT Rapid Mapping evaluation also considered sustainability from the perspective of UNITAR delivering the service in light of the service's present business model. On learning, the Director emphasized that this function was often overshadowed by the accountability function and that learning needed to be embedded in broader knowledge management and organizational learning strategies to be effective, so that stakeholders beyond those immediately concerned can learn from evaluative undertakings. **The Board took note of the observations made and the presentation on the results of recent evaluations and lessons learned.**

16. Under item 7, Finance and budget, the Chair invited the Finance Committee's Chair to introduce the Report of the Eleventh Session of the Finance Committee (UNITAR/BT/59/FC/11/2) who then provided a brief overview of the Committee's recent session. Under item 7a, Audited financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2017 and Report of the Board of Auditors, the Finance Committee Chair referred to the Committee's report and noted that the audited financial statements indicate a sound financial situation of UNITAR on which the Board commended the Executive Director. It was recommended that the Board approve the Revised Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and the Enterprise Risk Management Policy. On donor contributions, although concern was raised regarding the challenge to mobilize non-earmarked funds to the General Fund, the Executive Director noted that donor contributions were overall very encouraging and expressed hope that loosely-earmarked funds (as opposed to strictly non-earmarked funds) would prove to be a fruitful means to leverage further support from the donor community. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2017, commended the Executive Director on the healthy financial state of the Institute, took note of the Report of the Board of Auditors, approved the revised Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and the Enterprise Risk Management Policy, and requested that Management report to the Board on the implementation of the policies at its Sixtieth Session.**

17. Under item 7b, Internal audit, the Finance Committee Chair noted the unique, autonomous character of the Institute and referred the matter to the Executive Director, who confirmed that the internal audit human resources management was still ongoing and that the Board was only required to be consulted, through the Finance Committee, on the audit's terms of references, in accordance with the Board's rules of procedure. The Executive Director noted the confusion that often surfaces between UNITAR as an independent, autonomous entity and staff rules and regulations as they apply to staff of the UN Secretariat, and that the statutory powers given to the Executive Director are sometimes not understood by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. He indicated that Management would place the finalized report of the audit before the Board at its Sixtieth Session. **The Board took note of the terms of reference of the internal audit on human resources management.**

18. Under item 7c, Report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund, the Finance Committee Chair introduced the item and noted that the principal challenge is that while the combined programme support cost (PSC) and direct service cost (DSC) rate was 18 percent, the combined rate has not been applied consistently given the particularities of some donors and projects. The Committee discussed the dilemma between adherence to the full rate and flexibility, and concluded that resource mobilization efforts underway could close the revenue gap with the combined rate not being fully applied. The high transaction costs involved in managing a large number of small-scale projects was noted, and that this bigger picture needed to be also taken into consideration when assessing cost recovery. The Executive Director briefly reviewed the Institute's funding model which is based almost entirely on earmarked contributions to projects, and a cost-recovery mechanism that applies 18 percent of project funds to cover the costs of the central units. He underscored the competitive environment in which UNITAR operates and that a certain degree of flexibility was needed, and that while the actual average cost recovery was around 15 per cent, the gap was met through non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund.**

19. Under item 7d, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Finance Committee Chair recalled the briefing by the Executive Director on the hearing with the Advisory Committee and the challenges for ACABQ members to understand the particularities of the Institute. She suggested that the item be addressed in tandem with the item 7e, Proposed Revision to the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2018-2019. The Finance Committee Chair noted that while the proposed revision to the Programme Budget of $55.56 million is a decrease of $1.78 million from the original budget submitted at the Fifty-Eighth Session, the revision represents a growth of 8.2 per cent over the 2016-2017 Programme Budget. The Finance Committee Chair also drew the Board's attention to the Advisory Committee's remarks on partnerships and indicated that it would be instrumental for UNITAR to leverage new partnerships, including with the business sector.

20. Trustees put forth several questions and comments, including challenges related to the vacant positions in UNOSAT as indicated in the organizational chart and Horizontal Learning Services (HLS). On HLS, a question was put forward as to why the Knowledge Systems Innovation (KSI) Unit was proposed to be closed and then a new entity created. The Executive Director provided a review of the UNITAR budgetary process, noting that the total budget reflected the anticipated revenue for the two-year cycle. While noting that the proposed budget revision was a growth of 8.2 per cent over the previous biennium (2016-2017), he explained that it was nevertheless a reduced budget from the one originally adopted by the Board at the Fifty-Eighth Session due to a number of programmatic adjustments, such as the closure of the Pakistan Evidence and Learning Project. The Executive Director emphasized however that the budget was anticipatory, and that the actual income mobilized could likely be greater than the proposed revision, and that this represented the major difference with the UN regular budget. With regard to UNOSAT, he clarified that the five vacancies indicated in the proposed revision were expected to be filled within two to three months. On the question related to HLS, the Executive Director mentioned that UNITAR had a similar service, KSI, although it was at present not functioning, as the Manager was on long-term medical leave and was not expected to return. He mentioned that although nothing had been decided with respect to HLS, he was anticipating advice and guidance from the Board in terms of what kind of unit could provide services to programme units to ensure some degree of instructional design, technological adaptation, quality assurance and methodological consistency for UNITAR to be recognized at the cutting edge and the best in business. It was mentioned that standardized processes and procedures (e.g. in adaptive testing) help in managing quality, but clear outcomes and measures of success were not clear and needed to be defined. It was suggested that even if funds were not immediately available to support such a service, it would nevertheless be useful for UNITAR's operational strategy to develop the service as if it exists. The external dimension of the service was also mentioned in so far as UNITAR clients may require the knowledge and skills in various change management processes in order to be able to deliver on the SDGs. Given the matter's importance, it was suggested to learn from the KSI experience before taking any decision. **The Board took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Board took note of the observations made by members during its discussion of the proposed Revision to the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2018-2019 and of the Report of the Finance Committee. The Board adopted the Revision to the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2018-2019 as proposed. The Board requested Management to mature the Horizontal Learning Services concept and report to the Board at the Sixtieth Session.**

21. Under item 7f, Update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund, the Finance Committee Chair reviewed the item as discussed by the Finance Committee. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and the update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund.**

22. Under item 7g, Update on the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy, the Finance Committee Chair recalled the UNITAR We Want as a yardstick to measure the Institute in the coming years and the importance of pursuing a focused Resource Mobilization Strategy and being selective in engaging with strategic actors. She mentioned the need to enhance the Resource Mobilization Strategy and that the Committee considered and endorsed Management's proposed changes to the Policy Guidelines with Financial Implications for the Disbursement of Funds to Implementing Partners that would open the possibility of considering the business sector as an

implementing partner under certain conditions. The Board put forth a number of comments and questions under this item, including the need for the Institute to engage with the business sector and questioned what strategies Management could consider to encourage such partnerships. The Finance Committee Chair suggested that such revisions could include a more specific action plan e.g. for engagement with partners and the business sector in particular. The Chair of the Board urged Members to advocate for and raise partners' awareness of UNITAR. The Executive Director placed the discussion under the overarching dimension of partnership development, with financial partnerships and non-financial partnerships, and that content development, methodological support and technology, for example, could be pursued with partners through non-financial instruments. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations, took note of the update on the Resource Mobilization Strategy and approved the proposed changes to the Policy Guidelines for Agreements with Financial Implications for the Disbursement of Funds to Implementing Partners. The Board requested Management to revise the strategy as a broader partnership development strategy, with both financial and non-financial components.**

23. Under item 7h, Strategic Framework Fund, the Finance Committee Chair briefed the Board on the Committee's consideration of the item and the proposed Governing Principles that have been circulated by Management. As a backdrop, she explained the limitations of UNITAR receiving most of its income on a project-by-project basis and that the proposed Strategic Framework Fund (SFF) would enable the Executive Director to allocate loosely-earmarked funds to support the implementation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework. The Executive Director indicated that the SFF would still enable donors to make contributions based on thematic, geographical, strategic or other development cooperation priorities, but yet it would not have the limitations of being strictly earmarked for activities. While welcoming the SFF initiative, it was suggested that Management exercise due diligence on the source of the funds from non-governmental sources. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and approved the establishment of the Strategic Framework Fund and the Governing Principles as revised with a due diligence exercise to be undertaken on the acceptance of funds from non-State contributors.**

24. Under item 7i, UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy, the Finance Committee Chair reviewed the rate of return in 2017 at 1.34 per cent and noted that there was an increase in the rate from the previous year (.77 per cent). **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and recommendations, and took note of Management's update on the implementation of the UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy.**

25. Under item 8, Dates for the Sixtieth Session of the Board and adoption of the Fifty-Ninth Session's conclusions and recommendations, the Board agreed to convene in Geneva from 28 to 29 November 2019 for its Sixtieth Session. The Board agreed to adopt the report of the conclusions and recommendations of tits Fifty-Ninth Session as a follow up to the session.

26. Minister Amaechi expressed gratitude to Members for traveling to Abuja. The Executive Directed recognized the Chair for the efficient conduct of the session's business. He thanked Minister Amaechi for generously agreeing to host the session and for the support received from the Government of Nigeria, as well as the Board's secretariat and UNITAR's Nigeria Project Office for supporting the session.

27. The session was adjourned.

**KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**


**Item 5: Implementation of the 2018–2021 Strategic Framework**
The Board took note of the observations made and the update on the implementation of the 2018–2021 Strategic Framework, and commended Management for the alignment of programming to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Item 6: Programming and reporting**
**Item 6a: 2016–2017 Programme Performance Report, 2017 Results Report and Key Performance Indicators**
The Board took note of the observations made, the 2016-2017 Programme Performance Report, the 2017 Results Report and the Key Performance Indicators. The Board requested Management to include age and disabilities in the disaggregated data in future reports.

**Item 6b: Fit-for-Purpose: UNITAR Programming and Frontier Issues**
The Board took note of the observations made and the note on Fit-for-Purpose: UNITAR Programming and Frontier Issues. The Board endorsed the following specific recommendations for Management:
- Develop a learning module on ethics and the Internet;
- Consider developing training programmes based on the recommendations of the Digital Cooperation Panel, once issued;
- Modernize learning programmes and mainstream the use of applicable technologies in UNITAR's programming;
- Develop partnerships with the academic and business sectors, including larger companies, to develop relevant training programmes, and support small and medium sized enterprises in the field of cybersecurity; and
- Continue to use virtual reality, 3D and other innovations for learning and continue to deliver the modules in multilateral diplomacy, In the area of big data, explore how partnerships with companies who are the repositories of big data can be developed for the benefit of countries in special situations, together with UN partners.

**Item 6c: Education and Training for those Furthest Behind in Africa**
The Board took note of its discussions and the note on Education and Training for Those Furthest Behind in Africa. The Board noted in particular:
- the changing demographics in Africa and the need for UNITAR to give priority to programmes for promoting opportunities for job creation and employability;
- the need to promote enhanced coordination, including multi-stakeholder coordination; and for working to strengthen institutional capacity development, including through training of trainer approaches, with the aim to reach more individuals in need of learning;
- from a thematic perspective, explore health-related areas in programming; and
- to have clear goals, ensure added value for people and consistently monitor, evaluate, review and make the shifts for activities to become more relevant.

**Item 6d: Results and lessons learned from recent evaluations**
The Board took note of the observations made and the presentation on the results of recent evaluations and lessons learned.

**Item 7: Finance and budget**
**Items 7a: Financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2017 and Report of the Board of Auditors**
The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2017, commended the Executive Director on the healthy financial state of the Institute, took note of the Report of the Board of Auditors, approved the revised Anti-Fraud

and Anti-Corruption Policy and the UNITAR Enterprise Risk Management Policy, and requested that Management report to the Board on the implementation of the policies at its Sixtieth Session.

**Item 7b: Internal audit**
The Board took note of the terms of reference of the internal audit on human resources management.

**Item 7c: Report on the Application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund**
The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund.

**Item 7d: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions**
**Item 7e: Proposed Revision to the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2018-2019**
The Board took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Board took note of the observations made by members during its discussion of the Proposed Revision to the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2018-2019 and of the Report of the Finance Committee. The Board adopted the Revision to the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2018-2019 as proposed. The Board requested Management to mature the Horizontal Learning Services concept and report to the Board at the Sixtieth Session.

**Item 7f: Update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund**
The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and the update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund.

**Item 7g: Update on the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy**
The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and the update on the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy and approved the proposed changes to the Policy Guidelines for Agreements with Finance Implications for the Disbursement of Funds to Implementing Partners. The Board requested Management to revise the strategy as a broader partnership development strategy, with both financial and non-financial components.

**Item 7h: Strategic Framework Fund**
The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and approved the establishment of the Strategic Framework Fund and the Governing Principles as revised with a due diligence exercise to be undertaken on the acceptance of funds from non-State contributors.

**Item 7i: UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy**
The Board took note of Report of the Finance Committee observations and took note of Management's update on the implementation of the UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy.

**Item 8: Dates for the Sixtieth Session of the Board and adoption of the Fifty-Ninth Session's conclusions and recommendations**
The Board agreed to convene in Geneva from 28 to 29 November 2019 for its Sixtieth Session. The Board agreed to adopt the report of the conclusions and recommendations of its Fifty-Ninth Session as a follow-up to the session.