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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

**Board of Trustees
Fifty-fourth Session**

UNITAR/BT/54/3
19 December 2013

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

1. The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) convened in Geneva from 28-29 November 2013 for its Fifty-fourth Session.
2. The following members of the Board were present or represented at the session:

The Most Honorable Portia Simpson Miller..... (Jamaica)
Also represented by Mr. Wayne McCook

Mr. Alexey Borodavkin (Russian Federation)
Also represented by Ms. Natalia Oreshenkova

Ms. Shirin Ebadi(NGO)

Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.....(International Organization)
Also represented by Mr. Nkoanyane C. Sebutsoe

Ms. Radha Kumar.....(Academia)

Mr. Nicolas Michel (Chair).....(Academia)
Also represented by Ms. Andrea Aeby

Ms. U. Joy Ogwu.....(Nigeria)
Represented by Mr. Kayode Laro

Ms. Anne Kristin Sydnes(Norway)

Ex Officio:

Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva
Represented by David Chikvaidze, Chef de Cabinet

Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles, Acting Head, Executive Director, UNITAR

Secretary:

Mr. Brook Boyer, UNITAR

Observers

Mr. Jafar Jovan, Director, United Nations System Staff College

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Mr. Armands Cakss, Finance and Budget Section
 Mr. Mohand Cherifi, Office of the Executive Director
 Ms. Marina Dinca Vasilescu, Chief, Operations Unit
 Ms. Sueli Girogetta, Knowledge Systems Innovation Unit
 Ms. Akiko Perona, Communications and Information Technology Support Section
 Mr. Brandon Turner, Hiroshima Office
 Mr. Ron Valerio, Communications and Information Technology Support Section

3. Mr. Nicolas Michel, Vice-Chairman of the Board, welcomed members to the Fifty-fourth Session and extended a particularly warm welcome to the Most Honorable Portia Simpson Miller. He conveyed the apologies of Ambassador Henri Lopes, Chairman of the Board, who for unforeseen reasons was unable to attend the session.
4. The Chair announced that the Board had constituted quorum, with eight of the 12 members present or represented. In accordance with the rules of procedures, the Chairman extended full powers to Mr. Kayode Laro as the designated representative of Ambassador U. Joy Ogwu. He also extended full powers to Ambassador Wayne McCook, to Ms. Natalia Oreshenkova, to Mr. Nkoanyane C. Sebutsoe and to Ms. Andrea Aeby as the designated representatives of the Most Honorable Simpson Miller, Ambassador Alexey Borodavkin, Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and himself, respectively, in the event circumstances required the members to be absent during part of the session.
5. The Chair announced that the session was convening parallel to the fiftieth anniversary since the General Assembly adopted its resolution establishing UNITAR in 1963 and that a special, high-level event would be taking place to mark this important occasion. In making reference to the informal consultations of the Board in July 2013, the Chairman also announced that a video conference was scheduled with the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation in the afternoon of 29 November 2013.
6. The Executive Director welcomed members and briefed the Board on programme developments since the Fifty-third Session, including the expected number of events and beneficiaries for 2013; the release of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of UNITAR; and the development of the 2014-2017 Strategic Framework and, in particular, the planned programming to support the Post-2015 Development Agenda process. The Executive Director also informed the Board that Management anticipated planned income for 2013 to reach \$21 million by the end of December, which would include a significant contribution from Algeria. Looking forward, the Executive Director mentioned that the proposed 2014-2015 Programme Budget was prepared on the basis of an improved financial outlook with fundraising for new programming optimistic. She also indicated that the proposed budget was based on the assumption of 'no change' to the proposed consolidation and that any change would require Management to return to the Board for approval on a budget revision. Finally, the Executive Director brought to the Board's attention a number of administrative circulars issued since the Fifty-third Session as contained under Annex 1 of the Board's documentation. **The Board took note.**
7. Under item 2, Adoption of the agenda, the Chair introduced the provisional agenda and proposed that an additional item as suggested by the secretariat, programming related to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, be incorporated as item 9c under programming highlights. **The Board agreed and adopted the agenda as revised.**
8. Under item 3, Organization of work, the Chair proposed that the Board conducts its business from 9:30 to 12:30 and from 14:00-16:30 on Thursday, 28 November 2013, after

which it would reconvene on Friday morning at 9:30 to 12:30 and then in the afternoon from 14:00 to 16:00, with a video conference scheduled with the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation from 15:00-16:00. The Chair announced that he would need to be absent for a limited period in the afternoon meetings and that Ms. Anne Kristin Sydnes had agreed to preside over the session in his absence. **The Board agreed and adopted the organization of work.**

9. Under item 4, Membership matters, the Chair informed the Board that the terms of most members would expire at the end of 2013 and that based on previous discussions the Executive Director had consulted with the Secretary-General with a view to extending the terms through the end of 2014 taking into consideration the importance of ensuring continuity in membership during the proposed consolidation process. **The Board took note.**
10. Under item 5, Follow-up from the Fifty-third Session, the Chair introduced the three sub-items. Under sub-item 5a, Consolidation of the United Nations research and training institutes, the Chair recalled that the matter was discussed most recently by the Board during an informal, virtual consultation held in July 2013, and that following further consultations, the Secretary-General had released his report on the Research, training and library services, A/68/485. The Chair indicated that the Board's Finance Committee also discussed the financial implications of the proposed consolidation at its meeting of 17 November 2013 and requested the Executive Director to report to the Board as concerns the committee's observations and questions.
11. The Executive Director briefed the Board on the current vision of the proposed consolidation with loosely linked research, training and library service lines. She indicated that while the research institutes would remain independent, the training institutes (UNITAR and the Staff College) would be placed under a unified leadership and management structure while maintaining their respective brands and physical locations, and that any opportunities to rationalize programming and administrative support overtime would be identified and acted upon. While the Assistant Secretary-General of a unified training/learning function would work to promote coordination between the research institutes so that the results of research could contribute to training activities, the Executive Director further indicated that there would be no institutional authority or governance linkages between the training/learning functions and the research institutes. With regard to the libraries, the Executive Director informed the Board that the New York and Geneva libraries would also be placed under unified leadership and management under a United Nations Library Board. The Executive Director informed the Board that the proposal was discussed by the First Committee of the General Assembly, and that the Report of the Secretary-General would need to be discussed by the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, likely during the resumed session of the General Assembly in early 2014.
12. In response to observations and questions raised by the Finance Committee on the implications of the proposed consolidation for UNITAR, the Executive Director informed the Board that much would depend on how the proposed consolidation exercise unfolds, noting that with the present vision, UNITAR would be the basis of an integrated training/learning entity and that the Institute's Board of Trustees would be reconfigured to become the Board of the integrated entity, with the Board of Governors of the Staff College acting as an advisory body on staff training matters. The Executive Director likened the current vision of the consolidation to the situation several years ago when the Institute's former Executive Director also led the Staff College. The Executive Director indicated that overtime, any rationalization would be done by the Board through normal budget processes. In addressing the Finance Committee's concern that the Director of Training is proposed to be located in Turin with two-thirds or more of all training being administered from Geneva, and the committee's question as to what the Assistant Secretary-General would do given that he or she would be only responsible for the training/learning services, the Executive Director indicated that her original understanding was that Assistant Secretary-General would be the overall director with a Director of

Training in Turin and a second Director of Training in Geneva. The Executive Director also made reference to the document summarizing the Institute's business model and made a comparison to the Staff College's approach. Noting that both entities currently have 39 staff members, the Executive Director emphasized that UNITAR has a total number of personnel in excess of 200 people, including a number being unpaid interns, giving UNITAR a very favorable ratio of one staff member to four other professionals, whereas the Staff College only accounts for a total of some 51 personnel. The Executive Director also made reference to the ratio of leadership and operational support costs to the programme costs, indicating that the Institute's ratio is presently 16:84, whereas the same ratio for the Staff College is 31:69. The Executive Director mentioned that the two models would need to be carefully understood if there was any suggestion for rationalization. From a programmatic perspective, the Executive Director found the proposed integration to be a good idea, citing various thematic areas where both UNITAR and the Staff College engage in training, such as climate change, peacekeeping and conflict prevention, and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, albeit to different client bases.

13. Prior to opening the floor to discussion, the Chair recalled the Board's statutory roles and responsibilities, such as formulating policies and principles, adopting the budget and, in that context, reviewing the work programme and composition, structure and staffing of the Institute. The Chair also informed the Board that on request from the Chairman of the Institute's Staff Association, he met recently with the Staff Council and listened to concerns expressed on the wisdom of some of the consolidation measures under consideration. He indicated that the Staff Council, while noting that the Executive Director has provided information briefings regularly, requested to be adequately associated in the process and to continue to be able to share its views.
14. Members found UNITAR to be an effective, efficient and useful institution. One member expressed disappointment and concern with the reduced scope of the proposed consolidation and questioned whether it would be worth pursuing since the broader idea of linking the various knowledge and learning services together to increase the institutes' leverage now appears to be mitigated. Another member expressed doubts on the proposed consolidation exercise, cautioned against pursuing reforms when the Institute was performing well and noted that integration could produce adverse and undesired effects on the confidence that the Institute has earned over the years with partners and donors. The member observed that while both institutes may find themselves working in similar thematic areas such as peacekeeping, the institutes focus on two different and distinct client bases. Finally, the member noted that while any organization can be improved, it may be worthy to seek improvements through regular programme and budget approval processes and enhanced coordination as opposed to structural changes through the proposed consolidation.
15. Another member expressed difficulty in understanding with clarity the present status of the proposed consolidation process since the concept has evolved considerably from when it was initially introduced to the Board. The member recalled the way in which the idea was initially presented and asked for clarity if resistance to the proposed consolidation exercise is related rather to process than to substantive issues. The member suggested that it would be useful to map the different possibilities and perhaps focus on where UNITAR could contribute its strengths to the other institutes, noting that given the high level of performance over the past years, the Institute would have an upper hand in a new structure. Another member asked for clarity on the roles of the various actors concerned by the process, including the Secretary-General, the various committees under the General Assembly and the Board. Another member requested information on the timeframe.
16. The Chair made reference to the Institute's institutional elements, including the Statute and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1963 and 1987 establishing and reforming UNITAR, respectively. He indicated that while the United Nations organs have

a voice in the process, any change to the Institute as would be reflected in a change to the Institute's Statute would require consultation with the Board of Trustees.

17. One member expressed opposition to the proposal that the Director of Training be based in Turin and recalled the statement made by the Chairman of the Board, Ambassador Lopes, in October at the meeting in which the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation presented the Secretary-General's report. Given that the majority of training in a consolidated structure would be administered from Geneva and that a unified executive leadership would be based in Geneva, the member emphasized that a Turin-based location of the Director of Training would undermine the role of the proposed entity's Assistant Secretary-General, since the Director of Training would be for all practical purposes the director of the consolidated training/learning entity. Despite the indication in the report that the institutes' brands would be maintained in a consolidated structure, the member felt that merging the mandates of the Staff College and the Institute would not add any value and that the mandate of UNITAR would be weakened, with another trustee adding that there did not appear to be any evidence that integration of the two entities would strengthen the mandate of UNITAR in the delivery of training to Member States and that such a model of consolidation was untested. One member also made reference to the Institute's satellite and mapping programme, UNOSAT, which appeared in an illustration as part of the constellation of the independent research institutes and no longer within UNITAR, and asked the Executive Director for clarification. In concurring with what another member said in relation to any organization making improvements, the member referred to other ways to improve cooperation between the Staff College and UNITAR when the former Executive Director was simultaneously interim Director of the Staff College. The member indicated that coordination would appear much more promising than integration, and noted that the coordination approach is being applied to the research institutes as outlined in the Secretary-General's report. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the member raised the concern that any prolonged uncertainty may bring in terms of the Institute's funding and donor base, particularly given the fact that the Institute is entirely funded by voluntary contributions. The member was unequivocal in stating that any weakening or shifting of UNITAR functions or staff from Geneva to Turin would trigger a reconsideration of the resources that the host country provides to UNITAR. The member also stressed that the Board has not yet received a clear cost-benefit analysis, but noted that the business model, which was recently shared with the Board provides interesting information. He requested more information on comparison on the business models between UNITAR and the Staff College and to have information on the ratios between the professional and support staff of the two institutes.
18. In making reference to the original idea for consolidation, the Executive Director did not think that it would be possible to incorporate the research institutes or the libraries into a larger consolidated entity as originally discussed. The Executive Director did feel that the integrated training/learning pillar and an integrated library service would be a good idea, and that for the training pillar, the integration could be loose with an integrated leadership and management, and that any opportunities for rationalization would be taken up by the new management in consultation with the Board of Trustees and the advisory board of the Staff College. In relation to comments by members supporting enhanced coordination (in the place of integration), the Executive Director indicated that the voluntary funded nature of both institutes introduces an angle of competition that would make enhanced coordination challenging unless both entities would be part of the same budget process. The Executive Director confirmed that the Board of Trustees is the governing body of UNITAR which approves the structure, staffing and work programme, as well as adopts the budget, and that other United Nations bodies such as the committees under the General Assembly have no decision making authority on the Institute's budget. In relation to the question on the time frame for the proposed reforms, the Executive Director indicated that the proposed exercise would continue into 2014 with consultations with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and subsequently with the Fifth Committee, but that pending the results of the consultations, implementing the results could entail another year of work extending into 2015. In relation to the question on UNOSAT, the Executive Director indicated that nothing would change from UNOSAT's

current status as a UNITAR programme. The Executive Director informed the Board that the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation is working on a cost analysis exercise in close consultation with the Institute and the Staff College. The Executive Director indicated that it would be important for UNITAR to ensure that the analysis reflects the Institute's staffing structure in the broad sense and to ensure that there is an agreed definition on support costs.

19. The Board adopted on a nine-point statement summarizing its position on the proposed consolidation of the research and training institutes, and conveyed the points to the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation (appended as annex I to this report).

20. The Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation made a brief presentation on the proposed consolidation. Following the presentation, members put forward a number of observations and questions. In response to the comments from a member who did not think that structural changes were necessary when the Institute was performing very well, the Assistant Secretary-General acknowledged the excellent work that UNITAR is doing and stressed that the proposed consolidation exercise was intended to expand the Institute's success as a role model to the other institutes and that UNITAR would benefit most from the exercise. The Assistant Secretary-General confirmed that the points submitted by the Board would be reviewed carefully and taken into consideration, noting that exercise would not succeed unless the Institute's Board and staff are convinced. Another member stressed the importance of ensuring that nothing would be done to diminish the training to support the development of Member States. The Executive Director added that value of such an exercise where the institutes' respective brands and mandates are preserved would be to optimize results where, for example, training opportunities offered by UNITAR could be open to UN staff, and opportunities offered by the Staff College could be open to Member States for the same investment. The Assistant Secretary-General emphasized that by placing the Director of the Staff College under the UNITAR Executive Director, there would be more opportunities for training, enhanced synergies and savings and clearer lines of accountability.

21. Another member felt that a strong enough case has not been made to undertake the structural changes proposed, and that an unwieldy centralized superstructure could very well result. The member asked in particular what improvements would be derived for UNITAR with the proposed Director of Training based in Turin. Another member asked how a Turin-based Director of Training could provide effective direction of training administered from Geneva, what effects a consolidation might have on the location of UNITAR staff, and where the cost efficiencies would be realized taking into consideration the Institute's highly cost efficient business model. The Assistant Secretary-General informed the Board that a dialogue was underway with UNITAR and the Staff College to identify where efficiency gains could be made and that before any proposal on details involving staff, functions or mandates is presented to Member States for consideration, the UNITAR Board would need to be consulted and agree. The Assistant Secretary-General also confirmed that the exercise would not be hurried and that a two-year transition period was foreseen in order to avoid disrupting any staff member. In relation to the proposed reporting lines of a Director in Turin reporting to the Executive Director in Geneva, the Assistant Secretary-General referred to instances in the United Nations where similar reporting lines existed between senior management located in different locations and expressed confidence that a solution would be found with minimum staff movements between the two locations, and indicated that the substantive training function would continue to remain in Geneva and that any savings in administrative support functions would be invested in the training function in Geneva.

22. In concluding the discussion under this item, the Chair referred specifically to the two first paragraphs of the document submitted to the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation (Annex I) viz. the statutory role of the Institute's Board of Trustees, and the view that the current concept of the proposed consolidation would rather weaken the capacity of the two institutes to deliver on their respective mandates and there would be

no further efficiency gains expected within UNITAR. The Assistant Secretary-General stated that under the proposed consolidation, the reconfigured Board of UNITAR would not only have similar roles and responsibilities, but would have an expanded oversight role. He indicated that the proposed consolidation of UNITAR and the Staff College is meant as a modest, first step.

23. Under sub-item 5b, Fiftieth anniversary strategy, the Executive Director informed the Board that following the recommendation of the Board at its Fifty-third Session, the Institute has elaborated a strategy for celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of UNITAR and has designed a special anniversary logo which would be placed on all documentation. The Executive Director also announced that the Institute was launching the anniversary with a high-level event organized jointly with the Geneva Chapter of the Group of 77 with the presence of the Prime Ministers of Algeria and Jamaica, in addition to the Chairman of the Group of 77 in Geneva, the Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and a former Executive Director of UNITAR. On the occasion of the event, the Executive Director indicated that the Institute would be signing a Framework of Cooperation with the G-77, Geneva Chapter, recognizing the important and long-standing relationship between the Institute and developing countries.
24. Under sub-item 5c, Fundraising communication strategy, the Chair drew the Board's attention to the Report of the Sixth Session of the Finance Committee and the committee's recommendation that the Board takes note of the strategy's concept note. The Executive Director recalled the Board's recommendation at an earlier session for Management to target non-traditional donors and noted that Afghanistan, Algeria and Nigeria are providing some 30 per cent of the Institute's funding, and with the significant contribution from Algeria to the General Fund, this trend is becoming all the more noteworthy. The Executive Director indicated that the Institute was experiencing a new phase in which some of the middle income developing countries are now not only supporting the development of capacities of their own nationals, but also those of other developing countries, such as is the case with Algeria. The Executive Director also indicated that UNITAR was working to position itself to be not only a leading training service provider, but also a strategic partner of Member States to 'level the playing field' by ensuring that all Member States have access to the needed information ahead of important intergovernmental processes, such as the process unfolding for the formulation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.
25. In expressing encouragement with the funding developments, one member suggested that it may be useful for Management to consider organizing an event for UNITAR donors – new and old – to meet. Another member, in making reference to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, mentioned that it would be useful to work to raise the profile of the Institute in ECOSOC. In response to one question, the Executive Director clarified that the proportion of the Institute's self-generated funding was presently at some 10 per cent, with virtually all of the other income earmarked for specific purposes. **The Board took note of the fundraising communications strategy concept note.**
26. Under item 6, 2014-2017 Strategic Framework, the Executive Director asked Mr. Brook Boyer, in his capacity as the Manager of Planning, Performance and Results, to introduce the proposed 2014-2017 Strategic Framework. Mr. Boyer informed the Board that Management initiated a strategic thinking process which aimed at defining a new strategic direction around which the planned results of the 2014-2015 and 2016-2017 programme budgets could be presented. The outcome of the thinking process resulted in a new vision and mission statements, in addition to a set of high-level programmatic and functional objectives. Mr. Boyer indicated that the objectives and sub-objectives would be operationalized through the 2014-2015 proposed programme budget and that in doing so, Management would place emphasis on strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries from developing countries and in particular the least-developed countries, in addition to emphasizing gender as an important cross cutting area in programming. Management would also monitor progress towards achieving the objectives and report to the Board through annual performance reporting exercises. The Executive Director pointed to some

specific planned results, including programming related to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, international environmental law, climate change, financial and debt management and youth entrepreneurship, as well as new programming areas such as human mobility and crowd sourcing technologies.

27. One member expressed much interest in the programming areas and congratulated Management for its efforts in developing the framework with attention paid to details and technicalities as well as alignment with the results presented in the programme budget. The member suggested that more time should be allotted on the implementation of the framework in the Board's future sessions. In response to questions related to work being undertaking on youth entrepreneurship, the Executive Director indicated that UNITAR was focusing on assisting different parts of government to engage in dialogue and that this approach was being well received by the Algerian counterparts. Another member made reference to the massive open online courses (MOOCs) and asked if the presence of MOOCs was changing the way in which UNITAR was reaching out beneficiaries worldwide. The Executive Director indicated that this was very much the case at UNITAR and indicated as an example the Institute's plans to roll out MOOC-like courses on the Post 2015 Development Agenda once the agenda is known. **The Board approved the 2014-2017 Strategic Framework.**
28. Under item 7, Finance and budget, the Chair introduced the five sub-items and made reference to the Report of the Sixth Session of the Finance Committee and the other documents circulated by the secretariat related to this item, including the letter from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions which Management received subsequent to the committee's session.
29. Under sub-item 7a, Interim financial statements for the twelve-month period of the biennium 2012-2013 ended 31 December 2012, the Chair recalled the Finance Committee's observations on the lack of non-earmarked voluntary contributions and the request for information on the causes for the significant increase in contractual expenditures. The Institute's Finance and Budget Officer, Mr. Armands Cakss, commented on the income and expenditure figures in the financial statements and noted reserves and fund balances have slightly been reduced due to refund in connection with the closure of the Brasilia Office. The Executive Director noted that the increase in contractual expenditures was due to the change in methodology for calculating staff obligations. The Executive Director also noted with concern the lack of non-earmarked contributions and that building a non-earmarked reserve would be a priority for Management. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and the interim financial statements for the twelve-month period of the biennium 2012-2013 ended 31 December 2012.**
30. Under sub-item 7b, Report on the implementation of the new cost recovery formula, the Chair referred to the report of the Finance Committee and the recommendation that the Board takes note of Management's report. The Executive Director informed the Board that the approach is working well, although the approach is still in the initial phases of implementation and that a report next year would yield more information. The Executive Director recalled that Management has calculated that 16 per cent of total expenditure would be needed for executive leadership, management and support services, leaving 84 per cent for programming. The cost recovery formula was set on meeting the 16 per cent plus 2 per cent for building up a reserve. **The Board took note of the implementation of the new cost recovery formula.**
31. Under sub-item 7c, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Chair indicated that items 7c and 7d were discussed by the Finance Committee in tandem. In relation to item 7c, the Chair made reference to the Report of the Advisory Committee and the Management's answers to the Advisory Committee's questions. The Executive Director indicated that the Advisory Committee requested information on Management's tracking of income and expenditure over the past ten years, trends in numbers of beneficiaries from the Institute's programming and clarification on

the Institute's crowd-sourcing programming. The Executive Director informed the Board that the Advisory Committee agreed to Management's proposal to abolish unoccupied posts, but indicated that the Finance Committee recommended that Management suspend the abolishment of the posts until more is known on the proposed consolidation. **The Board took note of the information provided by the Executive Director and the report of the Advisory Committee.**

32. On sub-item 7d, proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015, the Executive Director noted that the presentation of both the financial and results components has changed from previous formats, with the costs grouped by Office of the Executive Director, including Planning, Performance and Results and fundraising; Support Services; and Programming. In reference to table 2 of the proposed budget, the Executive Director informed the Board that Management was projecting an increase in 21 per cent in income given the success of a number of programmes, including climate change, peacekeeping, UNOSAT, youth entrepreneurship, and the planned Post-2015 Development Agenda initiative. The Executive Director also drew the Board's attention to table 4 and indicated that most of the Institute's expenditures are people-related, including staff and non-staff (e.g. consultants). In terms of staffing, the Executive Director indicated that the Institute was only using 39 of 73 approved posts at the end of 2013 and noted that most of the unoccupied posts were never occupied. The Executive Director further indicated that Management was proposing the abolishment of 19 posts, including three senior supervisory D1 posts established in 2008 (one D1 for operations and two associate director posts), and fill the D2 Director of Training post later in 2014 pending the availability of funding. The Chairman referred to paragraph 10 of the Finance Committee report and the committee's recommendation that the Board adopts the proposed Programme Budget with a caveat to continue considering the impact of the proposed consolidation on the budget and to suspend the proposed abolishment of posts until further clarity is known on the proposed consolidation.
33. One member, in seeking clarification if the proposed abolishment of posts was in the context of consolidation or as a result of never filling the posts, suggested that the Board place a timeframe on postponing such a decision. The Chair confirmed that such a postponement would be until further clarity is known on the proposed consolidation. Management informed the Board that in the proposed Programme Budget as circulated, the number of 600 targeted beneficiary outputs under objective 3.1 a-d on enhancing environmental sustainability was inadvertently omitted, and that with respect to functional objective 4.2, the correct performance target for indicator ii should be 70 per cent and not 55 per cent as recorded. The Chair added that in the event the Board suspends the abolishment of the posts, Management would then revise the presentation in the budget to reflect such a decision. **The Board took note of the observations, approved the recommendation to suspend the proposed abolishment of posts until further clarity is known on the proposed consolidation and adopted the proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015.**
34. Under sub-item 7e, Update on the 2012 external audit, the Chair summarized observations as contained in the Finance Committee's report and the recommendation that the Board takes note of the update. The Finance and Budget Officer briefly commented on the 2012 audit exercise and draft report, drew the Board's attention to several of the recommendations as presented under the sub-item's annotation and confirmed that Management accepted the recommendations and was working to take action on their implementation. **The Board took note of the update on the 2012 external audit.**
35. Under item 8 of the agenda, Report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Director indicated that the report was presented to ECOSOC in July and noted that the report reviewed progress by the Institute since the submission of the 2011 report and contains much information in which the Board is already familiar, such as quality assurance, training-of-trainers, the emphasis Management is placing on training-related events tailored specifically for beneficiary needs, the preparation of the

new strategic framework, the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute and the ongoing discussions on the proposed consolidation. On beneficiaries, the Executive Director reviewed briefly some of the challenges related to tracking beneficiaries given the breadth and depth of so many different types of events, from long-term executive masters-level programmes to short-duration workshops.

36. One member referred to measuring quality vs. quantity and asked how an emphasis on quality is being perceived in terms of Member States and donors accepting or questioning the approach. The Executive Director replied that Member States and donors appreciate the emphasis that the Institute assigns to quality and mentioned that Management takes into consideration two processes, including how the quality of a learning-related event is assessed (referring to internal and external quality certification schemes) and how the results of such events are measured and evaluated. The Manager of Planning, Performance and Results reviewed briefly the Quality Assurance Framework which was presented to the Board at its Fifty-third Session, and the general approach followed for evaluating learning-related programming. The Chair thanked Management for the brief presentation and emphasized that the quality and evaluation mechanisms are good illustrations that the Institute is at the fore-front in producing quality outputs. In response to the question by one member on UNITAR focusing on good governance, the Executive Director indicated that the Institute has a large portfolio on corruption and accountability and on governance issues at the municipal level, but that at the moment the Institute does not have a large programme on good governance. **The Board took note.**
37. Under item 9, the Chair introduced the three sub-items on programming highlights. Under sub-item 9a, Hiroshima Office, Mr. Brandon Turner, Head of Office, introduced the office which was established initially on the invitation from the Hiroshima Prefectural Government to contribute to international peace and development. Mr. Turner mentioned the advantage of the Institute having a physical presence in Hiroshima particularly by capitalizing on the lessons learned by the city's post conflict reconstruction efforts. The Head of Office focused his presentation on the Fellowship Programme for Afghanistan which builds skills in leadership and management, organizational development and management, project planning and in other areas for the future generation of Afghan leaders and managers. Mr. Turner emphasized that the programme is a long-term initiative using a blended approach to training and a world-wide network of resource persons. Since the Office has been in existence, the programme has taken place annually for the past ten years, with 83 events per cycle having produced a cumulative total of 336 graduates from over 42 different entities including ministries, universities, nongovernmental organizations, etc. The Head of Office also indicated that the programme is undertaken as on-the-job training, requiring the support of the beneficiaries' supervisors.
38. In response to a question on the ongoing development challenges in Afghanistan and the impact of these challenges to programming, the Head of Office explained that the Institute uses a large number of Afghan resource persons to be able to contextualize the programming to the on-the-ground realities and monitors the situation closely with a view to expanding on activities to meet additional needs by building on the success of the Afghanistan Fellowship. In response to another question on including good governance and anti-corruption, Mr. Turner indicated that programming has included transparency and anti-corruption in partnership with the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute and with the Ministry of Finance on public financial management. Mr. Turner also highlighted the importance of including a component on social entrepreneurship to facilitate the development of initiatives with social benefits. Efforts have also been made to include gender mainstreaming as a crosscutting component in the programme. While this has been challenging given the cultural context, Management has engaged Afghan resource persons, coaches and mentors with the aim that communicating the gender message would be more effective.
39. Under sub-item 9b, Skills development for youth entrepreneurship, Ms. Sueli Giorgetta, Manager, Knowledge Systems Innovation, reviewed the development of this initiative and

stressed the importance that Algeria, as donor and government beneficiary, had attached to pursuing a new, difference approach to youth entrepreneurship capacity development. In describing the programme, Ms. Giorgetta emphasized the importance the Institute has placed on engaging all stakeholders, including not only government but also the intended, direct beneficiaries, in needs assessment and programme design. She also mentioned the short-coming of many other related initiatives with a lack of attention given to the evaluation of results to be achieved. While UNITAR was fully aware of the objectives of the programme in entrepreneurship development, Ms. Giorgetta emphasized that UNITAR's role has been one of facilitating a process to engage the stakeholders as opposed to approaching the stakeholders with a pre-designed training package.

40. One member commented that the approach was very inspiring and that she was pleased to see UNITAR pursuing such a future-oriented programme in cooperation with Algeria. In response questions on the impact of the project and the gender dimension of youth entrepreneurship, Ms. Giorgetta emphasized the importance of enshrining a gender dimension given the unemployment trends particularly amount young women in Algeria and remarked that the gender balance has been fortunately quite balanced in programme activities to date. Ms. Giorgetta replied that impact was very much related to the project's ambition to aim to develop in the long-term enterprises that are associated with the national development priorities such as agriculture, information technologies and renewable energies. Finally, Ms. Giorgetta mentioned that the longer-term expectation of the project is that the approach pursued may serve as a model that can be applied to other countries or regions.
41. Under sub-item 9c, Post-2015 Development Agenda Programming, the Executive Director announced that this new thematic area of programming would be delivered in cooperation with the Staff College and other partners, and noted that in as much as Member States need to understand the process and substantive areas of the new development agenda, United Nations staff would also need to understand the processes and issues. The Executive Director indicated that the first phase of the project would consist of a series of short briefings to delegates in Geneva, New York and at other locations with a view to ensuring that all delegates have access to the same level of technical knowledge. In a subsequent stage, the Institute would deliver a different series of technical briefings on any areas that Member States may request to be explored further. The Executive Director noted that the project would be sensitive, but that it presented a strategic opportunity for the Institute to be seen as an important resource to Member States. After the development agenda has been agreed by Member States, the Institute would then deliver a second phase of the project to develop knowledge on the goals, indicators, etc.
42. Members found the project to be very interesting with one member highlighting the systematic approach and the attention given to ensure a highly inclusive process to avoid the problems encountered leading to the agreement of the Millennium Development Goals. **The Board took note of the programming highlights.**
43. Under item 10, Adoption of the report and setting of the dates of the Fifty-fifth Session, **the Board agreed to adopt the report of the session's conclusions and recommendations as a follow-up to the session and on the basis of a draft report to be circulated to members for their endorsement.**
44. **In accordance with its responsibilities, the Board agreed to remain flexible and meet in special session and/or engage in virtual consultations as may be required pending the on-going process of the proposed consolidation. The Board agreed that its next regular session would take place in October or November 2014 at which time a proposed revision to the 2014-2015 Programme Budget would be discussed and adopted.**
45. The session was adjourned.

ANNEX I**Statement by the Board of Trustees in relation to item 5a of the agenda,
Consolidation of the United Nations research and training institutes**

1. The Board of Trustees reaffirms its statutory role in approving the structure, posts and budget of the Institute, and in accordance with the Statute and relevant General Assembly resolutions, expects to be given the opportunity to approve any proposed change to the structure, post or budget of the Institute. The Board views that any consolidated entity of an autonomous nature would require the Board to exercise similar roles and responsibilities as the present Board.
2. The current version of the proposed consolidation limits the scope to the integration of UNITAR and the Staff College (and separately the integration of the two libraries), as presented in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/485). The Board questions what value such a consolidation would bring in terms of increased effectiveness and efficiencies. The Board is concerned that the current concept may rather weaken the capacity of the Institute and the Staff College to deliver on their respective mandates. The Board is of the view that there would be no efficiency gains expected within UNITAR from the current concept, but understands that there may be efficiency gains realized by the Staff College.
3. While acknowledging that any organization can be improved, the Board's discussions reflected views that the Institute is an effective, efficient and useful institution with an impressive business model, and that there are not substantial reasons to undertake reform given the reduced scope of the consolidation as presented in the Report of the Secretary-General. Moreover there may be other methods of achieving desired results through a more active pursuit of programmatic synergies and partnership.
4. While acknowledging that the Institute and the Staff College may work on similar thematic areas, the Board recognizes that both institutes have distinct beneficiary client bases, with the Staff College focused on training UN staff, and the Institute focused on training beneficiaries of Member States.
5. As communicated by the Chairman on 17 October 2013 to the Assistant Secretary-General for Change Implementation, the Board is of the view that the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) of a new integrated entity should be in charge of training and that it would be meaningless to have an ASG without direct responsibility over training/ learning services. The Executive Director of the Institute explained that the vision is to have a D2 Director of Training under the ASG, with a D1 Director of Training in Geneva reporting to the D2 in Turin. The Board views that this management structure would not serve the Institute's mandate and could actually introduce inefficiencies and be counterproductive. In addition, the Board noted that three times more training is managed from Geneva than from Turin. The Director of Training should be in Geneva.
6. Effective management of the integrated training/learning function requires close interaction and easy access between the organization's leadership and key management functions, such as finance, budget, human resources, strategy and programming. The Institute's current operational flexibility and speed, which the Board highly values, would be undermined if these functions would be moved to Turin.
7. As previously expressed, the Board wishes to have a comprehensive cost analysis to review before any further decision is taken. The analysis should include a comparative analysis of the business models of the Institute and the Staff College, the ratio of support and professional staff, and the consequences of a re-location on various donors. The comparative analysis should be assessed not only on the basis of financial considerations but also in the broader context of the interests and needs of the beneficiaries, the resources in terms of expertise, academic support, personal interactions, etc.

8. As the Board expressed at its fifty-third session in April 2013, the Board underscores its concern on the possible repercussions on staff job security, not least in view of the Institute's autonomous nature.
9. The Board underscores the importance of clarifying the situation soon, since the current transition period presents uncertainties and has negative consequences on the staff and fundraising.