
UNITAR

UNITAR Board of Trustees
Forty-Fourth Session
Geneva
25 - 27 April 2006



United Nations Institute for Training and Research

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) held its forty-fourth session in Geneva from 25 to 27 April 2006.
2. The following Board members attended the session or were represented:

Mr. Munir AKRAM (Pakistan)
Representative: Mr. Aftab Ahmad KHOKHER

Mr. Kazuo ASAKAI (Japan)
Alternate: Mr. Ryo IDE

Mr. Kwame BAWUAH-EDUSEI (Ghana)

Mr. Jean-Marc BOULGARIS (Switzerland)
Alternate: Mr. Paul GARNIER

Mr. Luis Alfonso DE ALBA (Mexico)
Alternate: Ms. Socorro ROVIROSA

Mr. Roger DEHAYBE (OIF)
Alternate: Mr. Libère BARARUNYERETSE

Ms. Naéla GABR MOHAMED GABR ALI (Egypt)
Alternate: Mr. Tamin KHALLAF

Ms. Elisabeth GATEAU(France)
Representative: Mr. Edgardo BILSKY

Mr. Omar HILALE (Chairman)..... (Morocco)
Alternate: Mr. Azzeddine FARHANE

Mr. Milos KUZVART..... (Czech Republic)

Mr. George NENE..... (South Africa)
Alternate: Ms. Laura JOYCE

Mr. Henri PROGLIO.....(France)
Representative: Mr. Dominique HERON

Ms. Kafya RAMADAN(Kuwait)

Mr. Jean-Maurice RIPERT(France)
Alternate: Mr. Olivier MARTIN

Mr. Carlos Antonio da ROCHA PARANHOS(Brasil)
Alternate: Mr. Paulino Franco de CARVALHO

Mr. Chaiyong SATJIPANON (Thailand)

Mr. Zukang SHA..... (China)
Representative: Mr. Xiaokun YANG

Mr. Leonid A. SKOTNIKOV(Russian Federation)
Representative: Mr. Anatoly KHUDYAKOV

Mr. Aminu Bashir WALI..... (Nigeria)
Alternate: Mr. Saleh Manu PISAGIH

Ex Officio:

Mr. Marcel A. BOISARD, Executive Director, UNITAR

Mr. Sergei ORDZHONIKIDZE, representing the Secretary-General
Representative: Mr. Andres SMITH-SERRANO

Secretary of the Board

Ms. Nassrine AZIMI

3. Under Agenda Item 1 (Adoption of the Agenda), Item 2 (Introduction of New Trustees) and Item 3 (Arrangement of the Work Session) the Chairman first paid tribute, on behalf of the Board, to those Trustees who had completed their two terms, namely Ambassador Agnes Aggrey-Orleans, Professor Rasha Al Jabir Al-Sabah and Ambassador Yuji Ikeda, as well as Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian, who had left Geneva. The Chairman recalled their dedication and vision, their constant efforts with their respective governments, institutions and at the General Assembly, and finally their contributions to solving UNITAR's many long-standing problems. The Chairman then welcomed five new Trustees, namely Ambassador Kazuo Asakai, Ambassador Kwame Bawuah-Eduesi, Professor Kafya J. Ramadan, Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert and Ambassador Chaiyong Satjipanon, expressing confidence that their expertise, experience and commitment would be important assets for UNITAR in the future. Lastly, the Chairman commended the work of the Executive Director and staff of UNITAR, reminding Trustees of how the Institute had evolved, from its difficulties in the early 90's to the healthy and efficient institution it had become today. The main theme of the current session of the Board, as per its previous decision, would be the biennial budget about to begin, and the financial report of the finished biennium.
4. Agenda Item 4 (Programme Budget for the biennium 2006-2007) In presenting the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 the Executive Director made some preliminary comments. Regarding the situation of the General Fund, which in the past had been such a source of concern for Trustees, it had much improved. For the biennium ending 31 December 2005, thanks to both increased voluntary contributions and significantly larger Programme Support Costs (PSC) paid from the Special Purpose Grants (SPG), the General Fund had become more stable. Following fund-raising efforts by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and also a stronger information campaign, many developing countries had recently joined the ranks of donors and, though the amount of their contributions remained modest, this increase suggested a greater confidence in the abilities of UNITAR. As regards the income accumulated from PSC, UNITAR had tried, to the extent possible, to ensure that the 13 per cent rate was applied systematically. On average, UNITAR's overall PSC for the 2004-2005 biennium was 11.16 per cent. The SPG, too, had sharply increased, such that the 2006-2007 estimate was now just under \$30 million. The positive balance as at 31 December 2005 was \$11,298,319. It was important to note however that this amount was not a reserve as all funds were already earmarked by donors for specific projects.
5. The Executive Director had sought the approval of the Board for extension projects, funded by the savings made in the General Fund. He felt that this was pertinent and that there was a balance to be sought for UNITAR between using such savings for improved administration and using them for extended projects. He recommended the extension of four projects, up to the ceiling of \$600,000.
6. The Trustees welcomed the overall progress and expansion of UNITAR programmes and the healthy state of its finances. They also felt that these developments generally required more in-depth analysis and reflection by the Board as to the new priorities and direction for UNITAR. Discussions regarding the programme budget and finances of UNITAR would therefore have to be ongoing, set in the larger changing context of UNITAR itself as well as of the United Nations as a whole.
7. The Trustees felt that it was imperative for UNITAR to continue improving and, more importantly, adapting its programmes to the most pressing training needs of United Nations Member States in key or emerging areas, such as the environment and sustainable development, peacekeeping and peace-building or human rights. They generally agreed that these were historical and challenging times for the United Nations as a whole and that the need for training programmes able to adequately prepare diplomats and other national staff for such responsibilities was great. In other words, the Trustees felt that while UNITAR programmes

had expanded and improved, much remained to be done. The Trustees however had differing views as to the means of reaching UNITAR's multiple and varying objectives and its mode of operations. Some considered it important to maintain a certain degree of flexibility with regard to how programmes were prioritized while others felt that increased clarity in the management of the Institute's resources was paramount.

8. Specifically, some Trustees had concerns regarding the use being suggested for PSCs. Programmes funded through SPGs were often required to pay not only the 13 per cent PSCs but also additional administrative costs. This had allowed the General Fund to accumulate substantial savings, which were now being proposed for the conduct of extension projects. Though it was felt that strengthening the programmes of UNITAR was in itself laudable, the use of the PSC for improving the administration of programmes for which they were originally intended seemed even more pressing. It was of course understood that the PSCs made up for a large part of the General Fund, and that these funds could in principle be used to strengthen the foundations of the Institute according to the priorities set by the Executive Director, either for administration or for the conduct of additional projects.
9. The Executive Director brought some clarifications: first, he recalled that the 13 per cent PSCs was a decision of the General Assembly. At the start of the UNITAR's restructuring and in light of the Institute's difficult circumstances at the time, at its session of February 1994 the Board resolved that 'the Executive Director may decide not to ask for full project support costs for Special Purpose Grant projects, the funding of which may otherwise be jeopardized, provided that in no case shall project support costs be any less than five percent (5 per cent)'. Second, regarding the Trustees' concern with information dissemination, this remained a constant challenge for UNITAR. Clearly improvements had been made: the 2006-2007 Work Programme of the Institute was now available in the languages of the three regional offices of the Institute, the UNITAR website was constantly updated and a variety of improvements in the overall presentation of reports had been made. Third, regarding the Trustees' suggestions to increase the number and impact of training activities, he admitted that this was a perpetual quest for UNITAR, as it was for any training institution. UNITAR sought a diversity of perspectives and experiences for its faculty, which consisted mostly of current or former United Nations staff, diplomats and academics. Safeguarding the independent stance of UNITAR faculty would certainly improve the impact, relevance and credibility of UNITAR curricula. Fourth, regarding the Executive Director's proposal for the use of General Fund savings for extension projects, he felt this was particularly appropriate. For many years a key concern of the Board had been the lack of resources of the General Fund. Now that there was excess funding, what was the most effective use to be made of it?
10. In summing up the various opinions, the Chairman felt that there was a general consensus as to the improved financial status of UNITAR and the need to manage the next phase with prudence. The support of the Trustees to UNITAR was unanimous and the need to balance a certain degree of flexibility while being careful as to how the Institute managed its growth and improved finances was a key objective of the Board. It was thus important to think carefully of issues such as how to deal with overspending of the budget or the use of General Fund savings. Consequently, on the two pending budgetary issues, the Board reached some decisions: first, regarding the letter of the Controller suggesting the empowerment of the Executive Director with authority to incur a small amount of expenditure in excess of the budget, the Board felt that before any definitive decision, further research was required.
11. *¹Regarding the question of the PSCs and as a follow-up, the Chairman thought it necessary to conduct a study of all aspects -- conceptual, legal and operational -- relating to the PSCs. The study should also clarify the very definition and interpretation of the PSCs, and provide some*

¹ Specific follow-up actions by UNITAR Secretariat appear in italics

comparative analysis as to how other institutions similar to UNITAR were using such funds. This study would then be reviewed and debated by the Board at its forty-fifth session in 2007, to be prepared by UNITAR. With these conditions, the Board gave its authorization to the Executive Director to use the savings accrued in the General Fund for the purpose of the four project extensions he had recommended, up to a ceiling of \$600,000.

12. The Board approved the 2006-2007 budget of UNITAR.
13. Agenda Item 5 (Financial Report for the biennium ending 31 December 2005) The Executive Director thanked the financial services of UNOG for their assistance with the preparation of the 2004-2005 financial statements. During this period the income of the General Fund had increased by 68 per cent and expenditures by 17.5 per cent. As regards the SPGs, these had increased by 86.4 per cent and expenditures by 62.4 per cent. Regarding the biennium planning, budgeting of the SPGs had been mostly on target, with the difference between estimated and real budget at about 1 per cent only. The Board noted with satisfaction the progress made in improving the clarity of the presentations of the financial statements. With regard to the carry-over of the SPGs, the Board of Auditors had recommended clearer tables (and not just narratives) to show that these funds were actually earmarked and did not constitute some sort of 'reserve'. *The Board requested additional follow-up steps: (a) information on the fund investment policies of UNITAR and current status of these accounts; (b) presentation of financial tables in such a manner that the contributions column was separate and distinct from the interest column; (c) a request that the next budget presentation reflect a clear distinction between regular and operational expenditures; (d) staffing tables of UNITAR; and (e) detailed tables indicating the various donors (with the public and private sectors clearly delineated).*
14. Agenda Item 6 (Strategy of financial mobilization) Thanks to a more consistent fund-raising campaign, as well as the direct and personal involvement of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other Trustees, the financial situation of UNITAR, including that of its General Fund, had clearly improved, even if much remained to be done. The Geneva-based ambassadors could make a strong contribution by canvassing their regional groups and all Trustees could be instrumental by informing their constituencies of the mandate and work of UNITAR. The Chairman noted once again the symbolic importance of the increase in contributions to the General Fund by developing countries, and called for additional efforts to encourage Member States to provide voluntary contributions, which remained indispensable to allow UNITAR longer term vision, planning and operational capabilities. As regards UNITAR's main donors from developed countries, though not many had increased their voluntary contributions, most had remained generous with SPG. Indeed, voluntary contributions continued to be difficult to obtain, project funding frequently being more attractive to many donors. It was therefore important for UNITAR to continue seeking creative ways of strengthening its non-earmarked resources and also ensuring that least developed countries could benefit as easily from its programmes as wealthier nations. Lastly, some Trustees felt that the language used in previous years' fundraising campaigns, when there were real questions as to the very survival of UNITAR, was no longer appropriate, considering the relatively healthy state of the Institute currently. A new approach to fund-raising was thus necessary.
15. Agenda Item 7 (Rental and maintenance costs) The Board noted the General Assembly resolution (A/RES/60/248): 'Decides to provide the United Nations Institute for Training and Research with the amount of 242,000 dollars, being the equivalent of the amount of rental, maintenance and other administrative costs associated with conducting the core training programme for the biennium 2006-2007' and requested that reference to this subvention and the use thereof appear in a footnote in the budget documents. The Board felt that even if the overall health of UNITAR had much improved, recognition of the value of its programmes and support, however modest, by the United Nations regular budget was a welcome development.

16. Agenda Item 8 (Personnel) The Executive Director reported that overall the Guidelines established for the management of personnel issues was functioning well. He sought the advice of the Board with regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Joint Staff Committee, referring in particular to paragraph 6 of the aforementioned Rules. The Board agreed. Trustees also encouraged him to align as much as possible the status of UNITAR staff with that of the United Nations, even if the Institute did have a particular status and its staff was not considered regular staff of the Secretariat.
17. Agenda Item 9 (Follow-up on Resolution 60/213 of the General Assembly) The Executive Director reported that steps to address the request for diversification of venues for UNITAR events and the implementation of the Auditors recommendations had been completed. However, the Trustees were requested to react to item 11 of the resolution, namely the suggestion that UNITAR's biennial report be made to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the General Assembly, as was now the case. The Trustees unanimously felt that the current reporting mechanisms needed to be maintained: UNITAR activities were by far not limited to economic and social issues and had a wider reach, of relevance to *all* Member States. It seemed far more pertinent therefore that the General Assembly continues to be kept regularly informed of UNITAR's activities.
18. Agenda Item 10 (Follow-up on the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Board of Trustees) The Executive Director reported that all pending queries from the Board's forty-third session had been addressed. Advice of UNOG and the Auditors with regard to the presentation of the fund balance had been sought. Also, a first draft of the guidelines for cooperation with the private sector, prepared following the request of the Trustees, had been finalized and submitted to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and Auditors for their recommendations. Further guidance and suggestions from Trustees for the conduct of partnerships with the private sector would be necessary.
19. Agenda Item 11 (Follow-up on ACABQ Recommendations) and Agenda Item 12 (Amendments of the Statute). The 2006-2007 budget, presented to ACABQ on 7 March 2006, required follow-up action by UNITAR. Specifically, as regards the inclusion in future budget presentations of 'specific performance measures and indicators of achievement', the Board noted the pertinence of the recommendations. It did recall however that UNITAR, being a small organization, the mandate of which was first and foremost training, should avoid too excessive a focus on indicators and outputs at the expense of the most important aspects of its work, namely training. With this caution, however, UNITAR was encouraged to apply, whenever relevant and possible, any methods that could improve 'measurable transparency of outputs' as formulated by ACABQ. As regards the Capital Master Plan of the United Nations and its possible implications for the rental costs of the New York Office, it was deemed that the issue was still too distant to have any immediate implications for UNITAR.
20. The proposal to amend the UNITAR Statute, however, was somewhat problematic for the Board. While most Trustees felt it was a simple procedural step, others felt it to be an important decision not to be taken lightly and that the ACABQ recommendations did not specifically require it. The Board reached a compromise, agreeing that it would not object to the amendment of Article VIII, paragraph 13, of the UNITAR Statute by the Secretary-General if he felt this was necessary for budgetary purposes.
21. Agenda Item 13 (Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management) (SAICM) The Board adopted the proposal to sign the official decision relating to the endorsement and incorporation of the SAICM objectives into UNITAR programmes.

22. Agenda Item 14 (“United Peoples” Project) Regarding the United Peoples Project, which had been accepted by the Board at its previous session, the Executive Director reported that while some developments and further refining had taken place since last year, full funding had still not materialized. Considering the ambition and originality of the project, the Trustees emphasized the importance of ensuring the best conditions for its execution, notably as regards to the budget, training focus, management, security, insurance policies, outputs etc. *To this end the Board requested the Executive Director to prepare a more extensive paper on the project and, specifically, on some of its training components and outcomes.*
23. Agenda Item 15 (Review of Mandate) The mandates of many United Nations bodies, created decades ago, had naturally evolved or expanded over time and Member States rightly felt the need for continued review of mandates to ensure their pertinence and avoid duplication. During the last session of the General Assembly and as a follow-up to the Millennium Summit + 5, the United Nations Secretary-General submitted a report to Member States (A/60/733) on the question of the review of mandates. In this context, UNITAR was also requested to submit some ideas, regarding training and research at the United Nations as well as the Organization’s specific training and research institutions. A short reflection was submitted by UNITAR to the Office of the Secretary-General and also circulated to all Trustees.
24. At the time of UNITAR’s establishment in 1965, its mandate, broadly speaking, was to conduct both training and research. Over the decades, however, this double mandate had been somewhat streamlined, until the early 90’s when it was specifically focused on training for Member States (with research being exclusively limited to research on/for training). This evolving mandate, the changing context of the United Nations itself, as well as the general reflection initiated by the Secretary-General on review of mandates made this a unique opportunity for the Board to further study UNITAR’s current mission and its future evolution. *It was decided therefore that an ad hoc informal reflection group would be formed, to prepare in consultation with the Secretariat, a more in-depth paper for the consideration of the Board at its forty-fifth session in 2007. The Chairman requested the Trustees from Brazil, France, Japan and South Africa to join him in this group, the schedule and modalities of which would be later decided.*
25. Agenda Item 16 (Any other business) Trustees had a number of follow-up questions. The Executive Director was asked to brief the Board on the specific role of private petroleum companies in recent UNITAR projects in Nigeria and elsewhere and to provide clarifications as to the structure and objectives of UNITAR’s plans, it being felt that UNITAR’s activities in such sensitive areas needed to be discussed by the Board before any final decision could be taken. There was also a suggestion to form an ad hoc group from within the Board for the review of accounts and finances of UNITAR in detail and in such a manner as to free Trustees’ limited time for substantive issues. The ad hoc group on the review of mandate could be a good model to follow and, pending the outcome of its deliberations, the Board could further pursue at its next session the creation of another group devoted to administration and budget. Finally, it was felt that as Trustees met only once a year, devoting a full session each alternate year to questions dealing only with finance and budget was not particularly satisfying, giving too few opportunities for Trustees to learn of UNITAR’s actual work. It was decided therefore that at each session, some time would be spent on programme-related matters.
26. Agenda Item 17 (Date and venue of the next session of the Board) It was decided that the forty-fifth session of the Board would be held during the last week of April 2007.
27. Agenda Item 18 (Adoption of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Board of Trustees) The Board unanimously adopted the conclusions and recommendations of its forty-fourth session.