



UNITAR
UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE
FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Board of Trustees 2007 Special session

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2007 SPECIAL SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) held a special session in Rabat on 7 December 2007, in response to a decision taken by the Board at its forty-fifth session in July 2007.
2. The following members of the Board were present or were represented at the session:

Mr. Kazuo ASAKAI (Japan)

Mr. Jean-Marc BOULGARIS (Switzerland)

Ms. Shirley FRANKLIN (Local authority)
Ms. Claire MC LEVEIGHN (Alternate)

Mr. Omar HILALE (Chairman)..... (Morocco)

Mr. Valery LOSHCHININ..... (Russian Federation)
Represented by Mr. Nikolay LOZINSKIY (Designated alternate)

Mr. Siphon George NENE..... (South Africa)

Mr. Tõnis NIRK (Estonia)

Mr. Henri PROGLIO (Private sector)
Represented by Mr. Dominique HERON (Designated alternate)

Mr. Chaiyong SATJIPANON..... (Thailand)

Ex Officio:

Mr. Carlos LOPES, Executive Director, UNITAR

Secretary:

Mr. Brook BOYER

Observers:

Mr. Marcelo Marotta Viegas, Counsellor, Embassy of Brazil, Rabat
 Mr. Jocelyn Fenard, Chief, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Section, UNITAR
 Ms. Ruth Högländ, Chief, Finance and Administration Section, UNITAR

3. The Chairman of the Board, Ambassador Hilale, opened the meeting and welcomed Members to Rabat and to the special session, indicating that it was the first time that the Board has convened outside of Headquarters.
4. The Chairman then thanked the Executive Director for submitting a comprehensive report of the last session. In congratulating the Institute and staff for preparing a draft Strategy on Partnerships, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization, he indicated to the Board that the task now is to deepen its reflection and analysis, and to examine the proposed 2008-2009 budget. The Chairman indicated that that Secretary-General had submitted his report on UNITAR to the General Assembly and that this special session coincides with the presentation of a draft resolution on the Institute in the Second Committee. In concluding his general observations, the Chairman indicated that the work completed over the past eight months in connection with the Institute's restructuring and transformation process is real and indeed producing results.
5. The Chairman then invited members of the Board to consider the provisional agenda as proposed by the Executive Director. There were no comments, and the agenda was adopted.
6. Under item 3 of the agenda, the Chairman proposed to conduct business from 9.00 to 13:00, after which members would be invited to lunch. He then proposed that the session would resume at 14:30 and could possibly complete debate by 16:00 or 16:30. The session could then resume a second time at 17:00 or 17:30 in view of discussing and adopting the draft report. There were no comments and the proposed organization of work as proposed by the Chairman was adopted.
7. Under item 4 of the agenda, the Chairman seized the opportunity to congratulate members Mr. Jean Maurice Ripert and Mr. Sha Zukang on their new assignments, and expressed thanks to the following members whose mandate is expiring at the end of this year: Mr. Luis Alfonso De Alba; Ms. Naéla Gabr; Ms. Elisabeth Gateau; Mr. David Hamburg; Mr. Sipho George Nene; Mr. Henri Proglio; and Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali. The Chairman then gave the floor to the Executive Director, who indicated that members Mr. David Hamburg and Mr. Aminu Bashir Wali had actually submitted resignations from the Board earlier this week as their terms were expiring and could not be present for this session.
8. The Chairman then introduced item 5 of the agenda and gave the floor to the Executive Director. Mr. Lopes briefly reviewed the matters which require follow-up from the 45th session, and then suggested that the Board endorse the suggestion to take up the matters under the relevant agenda items, with the exception of the item on the review of mandates which the Board may wish to place on the agenda at its 46th regular session. There were no comments, and the Board took note.

9. Under item 6 of the agenda, implementation on the work plan on staffing, the Chairman requested the Executive Director to brief the Board on the status of the changes to the Institute's human resources. In introducing the item, Mr. Lopes indicated that the Institute has undertaken a number of important actions, including the drawing up of a new organizational chart which will become fully operational on 1 January 2008 since some changes have budgetary consequences and require prior approval of the proposed programme budget. Other noteworthy changes include the integration of the Niger Delta Project Office into the work of the Local Development Programme. Mr. Lopes informed the Board that the relationship between the Hiroshima and New York out posted offices and Headquarters has been clarified. As discussed at the July session, the Executive Director recalled the fact that two new functions have been established: support services and research on training and learning methodologies. He also indicated that UNOSAT had been included in the research department, although its transition from UNOPS to UNITAR would not likely be completed before the next regular session of the Board. Until this time, UNOSAT would remain 'shared' between UNOPS and UNITAR.
10. On the issue of the regularization of contracts, the Executive Director announced that this is the first time personnel within the same categories have the same terms and conditions. Staff and personnel have new terms of reference and, also for the first time, the Institute has offered contracts for one year with a few exceptions. Mr. Lopes also indicated that there have been several recruitments made on a competitive basis, and that in the early part of 2008 a new Appointment and Promotion Board will be established.
11. Members congratulated the Executive Director for having taken concrete steps in connection with the implementation of the work plan on staffing and for having followed up by implementing the recommendations of the earlier report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (IOS). During the ensuing discussions on human resources-related matters. Mr. Lopes clarified that the Office of Legal Affairs was asked to interpret the degree of autonomy of UNITAR, and that the Institute expects to receive a decision before the next session.
12. In concluding discussion on this item, **the Board took note of the implementation of the work plan on staffing.**
13. Under item 7, draft Strategy for Partnerships, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization, the Chairman recalled the Board's request in July for the Institute to prepare a resource mobilization strategy, and then asked the Executive Director to elaborate. In briefing the Board, Mr. Lopes shared with the Board the basic elements and indicated that the draft Strategy was elaborated very much the same way as the Strategic Reform Plan.
14. Commenting on Strategic Priority 1, the Board indicated that broadening the donor base should focus on strengthening non-earmarked funding and that communication with missions in Geneva and New York should be improved in order to fill the gap of understanding on UNITAR. The Board encouraged UNITAR to approach Brazil and India in parallel to South Africa, in particular in the field of diplomacy training for which a cooperation agreement among those three countries is expected. The Board suggested also considering the elaboration of regional strategies for partnerships and resource mobilization. ***The Board highlighted the importance of follow-up of resource mobilization missions to donor countries, including Norway, Finland and Sweden, and requested that UNITAR provide board members with informal material on the results of resource mobilization missions.***

15. The Board mentioned the importance to implement Strategic Priority 3, “encourages UNITAR to become an example and leader for the UN system with regard to engaging the private business to adhere and support UN goals and objectives,” and that the Institute should address delegates and diplomats on public-private partnerships through its core diplomatic training activities. The Executive Director mentioned recent contacts he had made and the positive outcomes it generated.
16. Regarding Strategic Priority 4, ***the Board underlined the fact that the core diplomacy training should be promoted at the Fifth Committee as the unique diplomacy training programme offered by the United Nations.*** The Executive Director mentioned that UNITAR has already passed important milestones, such as convincing the Secretary-General, the controller, and receiving no objection from the ACABQ. The Second Committee has adopted today a resolution on UNITAR. While approaching the Fifth Committee, ***the Board suggested the Executive Director to visit countries that do not yet support the idea of UNITAR getting a contribution from the UN regular budget, and that the private sector in those countries is approached as an incentive for those countries to review their position.***
17. In his response, the Executive Director emphasized the fact that such a contribution from the UN regular budget would support exclusively core diplomacy training. Regarding the trend on decreasing the General Fund donations, the Executive Director indicated the following options: to decrease the number of training activities; to obtain voluntary contribution to have full funding; or to have full sponsorship (outside voluntary contributions and regular budget) explaining to countries that oppose by principle such support the advantages of these activities.
18. On the questions on UNITAR reporting to ECOSOC instead of the General Assembly, the Executive Director replied that it is in relation to the process of harmonization of the UN system and this should be considered as a natural move.
19. ***The Board welcomed the willingness to expand the number of CIFAL centers based on current assets and achievements, and suggested that a meeting of all CIFAL centres be organized soon, possibly in Atlanta, to work on adapting their status and working relationship to the new structure of UNITAR.***
20. All board members underlined the ambitious aspect of the strategy and indicated their commitment to actively support the Institute’s efforts. The Chairman confirmed his personal commitment, beyond the end of his mandate, to assist UNITAR in approaching the Gulf States.
21. In concluding its discussion, ***the Board welcomed the Strategy for Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, committed itself to support its implementation by promoting the Institute’s efforts widely among the diplomatic communities in Geneva and New York, and also urged Member States to support UNITAR’s Strategic Reform Plan.***
22. Under item 8 of the agenda, the Chairman invited the Executive Director to present to the Board the proposed programme budget for the 2008 – 2009 biennium. In presenting the budget, Mr. Lopes made some preliminary comments. The presentation has been dramatically changed from previous years with the full integration of the results-based budgeting framework. The document was compiled with the input of all programmes and sections within UNITAR. The Executive Director reaffirmed the principles of transparency, flexibility and accountability present in the budget. He distributed the draft ACABQ report on the budget which is complimentary to the efforts made and high level of implementation of the recommendations from the

Committee. The Executive Director called the attention of the Board to the fact that the budget approval is the Board's prerogative attributed by the statute, and it is not for any other body to replace such authority.

23. The subject of growth was discussed by the members. The budget shows an increase in expected expenditure of 29% from the previous biennium. The members discussed this issue and wondered whether the Executive Director might have alternative plans should the funding not materialise and whether this trend is likely to continue into future biennia. The Executive Director replied that this budget has been prepared in a conservative way and that the Institute is in fact expecting more projects to materialise but prefers to remain prudent, such that he is confident and of course accountable to the Board for the proposals. Furthermore, he indicated that should deviations be anticipated addendums may be presented to the Board in future sessions. Growth is expected to continue in the future, but at a slower rate.
24. Further explanations were requested concerning the three funds mentioned in the introduction of item 8. The Executive Director explained that these funds are being merged into one for budget presentation; however, the internal accounting records will still differentiate between the three funds. He also reiterated the fact mentioned at the last session held in July 2007 that he looks forward to being in a position to provide access to accounting records to all Board members to increase transparency.
25. The Executive Director also explained about the one-off investments that are expected to be incurred during the biennium. He confirmed that when sufficient funds are available capital investments will be made.
26. Members discussed if UNITAR should submit a progress report at the next meeting. The idea is considered very useful; however, with the next session scheduled for May, it is considered premature in the biennium to accurately reflect the expected trend for the whole biennium.
27. Board members were in general very positive about the new budget presentation and wished to show their appreciation and congratulations to the Executive Director and his staff for an excellent document that not only reflects an ambitious and exciting budget for the biennium 2008-2009 but is a strategic document and useful management tool that uses the results-based budgeting framework to clearly show objectives for each programme/ section and clear indicators of achievement, such that performance can be measured and achievements of the Institute can be identified.
28. In concluding its discussion, ***the Board approved the 2008-2009 programme budget of UNITAR.***
29. Under agenda item 9, New UNITAR logo and identity approach, the Chairman gave the floor to Mr. Lopes who recalled the Institute's strategic reform process and strategy and indicated that over the past few months UNITAR had been working on multiple fronts to produce a new, consolidated and enhanced image which would improve the perception of its uniqueness both within and outside of the United Nations. The new identity approach will include developing a new UNITAR website.
30. Members were then introduced to a brief slide presentation illustrating the process leading to the new logo. The Executive Director expressed appreciation to Veolia Environnement, which supported the development of the new logo. ***The Board took note.***

31. Under agenda item 10, nominations for the new Chair of the Board, the Chairman announced that with the completion of his second term, the Board would need to reflect on a candidate for his successor. He then suggested some 'personal parameters' or criteria that Members may wish to take into consideration given his experience chairing the Board over the past several years, such as physical proximity to the Institute's Headquarters in Geneva, one or two years experience on the Board and interest and availability to attend the Board's sessions.
32. The Board then agreed to interrupt its debate on this item for several moments to enable Members to consult. Following the consultations, **the Chairman announced that Mr. Tõnis Nirk had been elected as the next Chairman by acclamation.**
33. Under agenda item 11, Any other business, the Chairman gave the floor to the Executive Director, who indicated that it was important for the Board to discuss two additional items: 1) the dates and venue of the next session of the Board; and 2) consideration of a revision to the Board's rules of procedure. With respect to the dates of the session, Mr. Lopes indicated that it would be preferable for the Board to meet before the end of May 2008. The Chairman recommended that the Board avoid the dates of the World Health Assembly. Several Members then expressed their preferences, and Mr. Lopes announced that the Board would be informed in the next several weeks once the secretariat consults with the Division of Conference Services of UNOG.
34. With regard to the second matter, considering amending the Board's rules of procedure, Mr. Lopes reminded Members of the difficulty in achieving quorum over the past several sessions and the current requirement in rule 15 to obtain prior approval from the Secretary-General for an alternate of the Member to participate and represent the Member. The Executive Director suggested that to provide the Board with more flexibility, it may wish to amend rule 15 and replace "Secretary-General" with "Chairman". The modified text of rule 15 would then read as follows:

A member of the Board who is unable to attend a session of the Board shall designate an alternate and notify the Executive Director accordingly and in time to permit the member's alternate to attend. With the approval of the Chairman of the Board, the alternate designated by the member of the Board is entitled to exercise the full rights and duties of the member he represents. He participates fully in the deliberations and decision-making of the Board; however, he cannot be an officer of the Board or of a Committee of the Board. If such an alternate cannot be designated or himself cannot attend entirely or partly the meeting of the Board or its Committees, an alternate to an alternate is allowed to attend the meeting of the Board or its Committees as an observer. His designation is notified to the Executive Director by the Board member, the normally designated alternate or the Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

35. ***The Chairman put the proposal to the Board for decision; there were no objections to this amendment to rule 15 and the proposal was adopted.***
36. Following the adoption of the proposal to modify rule 15, ***the Board expressed its complements and sincere gratitude to His Majesty Mohammed VI, the King of Morocco, for the warm welcome, hospitality and support lent to the Board on the occasion of its 2007 special session.***
37. ***The Board then expressed its deep appreciation to the Chairman, Mr. Hilale, for his guidance, motivation and leadership that he has provided during his tenure.***

38. One outgoing Member expressed his appreciation to the Secretary-General for the opportunity to serve for two terms, to the Chairman and the Members of the Board, and to the previous and present Executive Director and his staff, and pledged continued support to the Institute.
39. The Executive Director then associated himself to the Statement of the Board and expressed his deep gratitude to the Royal Moroccan Government and to the Chairman for guidance and support, particularly as he had played a key role during the Institute's transition in leadership earlier this year.