



unitar

United Nations Institute for Training and Research



# Board of Trustees

Fifty-fifth Session  
20-21 November 2014

UNITAR/BT/55/5

12 December 2014

Geneva, Switzerland

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH 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 20 to 21 November 2014 for its Fifty-fifth Session. A list of the session's main conclusions and recommendations is attached as Annex I.

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

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

Ms. Shirin Ebadi .....(NGO)

Mr. Alexandre Fasel .....(Switzerland)

Mr. Thomas Fitschen .....(Germany)

Ms. Taous Feroukhi .....(Algeria)

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

Mr. Henri Lopes (Chairman).....(Congo-Brazzaville)

Ms. U. Joy Ogwu.....(Nigeria)  
Represented by Mr. Patrick Y. Gbemudu

Mr. Alfonso Quiñonez (Finance Committee Chairman) ... (Intergovernmental organization)

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

Mr. Alfredo Valladão .....(Brazil)

### **Ex Officio:**

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

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

### **Secretary:**

Mr. Brook Boyer, UNITAR

### **Observers**

Mr. Max Bond, United Nations University

### **United Nations Institute for Training and Research**

Mr. Einar Bjorgo, Manager, UNITAR Operational Programme for Satellite Applications

Mr. Armands Cakss, Finance and Budget Officer

Ms. Marina I. Dinca Vasilescu, Chief, Operations Unit

Mr. Achim Halpaap, Senior Manager, Environmental Governance Programme

Mr. Angus MacKay, Manager, Climate Change Programme

Ms. Akiko Perona, Chief, Communications and Information Technology Support

3. The Chairman welcomed trustees to the session and extended a particularly warm welcome to Ms. Taous Feroukhi, Mr. Thomas Fitschen and Mr. Alexandre Fasel who were appointed by the Secretary-General in 2014. The Chairman announced that the Board had constituted quorum, with 11 of 13 members present or represented. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the Chairman extended full powers to the designated representatives of the members who had notified the secretariat. The Chairman also welcomed Mr. David Chikvaidze as the designated representative of Mr. Michael Møller, in his capacity as the representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Max Bond, Vice Rector of the United Nations University (UNU), as an observer to the session. The Chairman noted the apology received from the Director of the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC), who was also invited as an observer and unable to attend.
4. The Executive Director welcomed trustees and observers to the session and noted that this past year has been positive taking into consideration the economic crisis that much of the international development community experienced particularly in 2012. In making reference to the 2012-2013 biennium, the Executive Director noted that there was a slight increase in income and expenditures, and that the Institute's output remained consistent with some 50,000 beneficiaries recorded for the budget cycle. She mentioned that 2014 was positive and expressed cautious optimism that 2014-2015 would be even somewhat better than 2012-2013 with potentially 10 to 15 per cent growth in programme expenditures. Among various achievements that would be presented under the draft 2014 Progress Report, the Executive Director highlighted UNITAR's training of delegates in preparing for major intergovernmental decisions, including climate change, the Hyogo Framework of Action 2 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In relation to the proposed revision of the 2014-2015 Programme Budget, the Executive Director noted that management expects some increase in income, particularly in the thematic area of the

environment, and has consequently proposed an increase in the revised 2014-2015 Programme Budget by some 4 per cent over the initial budget adopted by the Board at the Fifty-fourth Session. **The Board took note.**

5. Under item 2, adoption of the agenda, the Chairman introduced the provisional agenda and proposed that an item on elections be included, given that the terms of a number of members including the current Chairman would be expiring at the end of 2014. **The Board adopted the agenda as revised.**
6. Under item 3, Organization of work, the Chairman proposed that the Board conducts its business according to the schedule in the item's annotation. **The Board agreed and adopted the organization of work.**
7. Under item 4, membership matters, the Chairman announced that the Secretary-General had appointed three new trustees in 2014 as announced at the session's opening. He noted that Mr. Nicolas Michel had resigned from the Board effective 31 August 2014 and expressed his deep appreciation for his commitment and contribution to the Board especially as Vice Chairman. He also noted that the terms of a number of current members would be expiring on 31 December and that the Secretary-General would be making a number of new appointments for 2015. **The Board welcomed its new trustees and expressed its deep appreciation to Mr. Nicolas Michel.**
8. Under item 5, follow-up from the Fifty-fourth Session, the Chairman introduced sub-item 5a, consolidation of the United Nations research and training institutes, recalled that the matter was discussed at the Fifty-fourth session and invited the Executive Director to brief the Board. The Executive Director made reference to a letter that the Chairman of the Board had received from the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General. She read portions of the letter and indicated that the Secretary-General was of the opinion that structural consolidation would not be the way to go and that rather it would be useful to look at how the institutes could work better together through enhanced synergy and coordination. The Executive Director referred to the good partnership with UNSSC on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, recognized the presence of UNU as an observer at the session, and expressed confidence that a number of other areas could be identified for collaboration.
9. One member recalled the consolidation concept as presented at the 2013 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and expressed satisfaction that the concept has evolved from alignment to synergy through cooperation and that more attention would be paid to the specificities of each of the institutes. Reflecting on the amount of time and energy that the Board has discussed this matter, one member noted that cooperation boils down to an act of individual will and thought that it would be useful for management together with the other concerned institutes to discuss what the nature of cooperation can be and for management to present some ideas at the next session. Another member concurred on the importance of having a concrete understanding on what such cooperation would entail, while another member expressed much satisfaction that the views and concerns of the Board were taken into consideration by the Secretary-General and that there are no further attempts to merge UNITAR and UNSSC or create new structures in New York to administer the work of UNITAR and the other research and training institutes. The member thought that the discussions and debates on the issue brought forward good results and that while structural changes would not be wise, it would be useful for the institutes to seek to engage in cooperative initiatives during the early planning and budget preparation stages of programming so as to avoid duplication. Several other members concurred, with one member noting that promoting cooperation and synergy should not lend itself to a rigid set of conditions, one member observing that the Memorandum of Understanding with UNSSC can be an instrument through which cooperation can be strengthened and another member proposing that management update the Board at its next session.

10. The Executive Director expressed much encouragement with the discussions, noted that the Board plays an important role in providing an incentive for collaboration to take shape and suggested that the Board may wish to require management to report regularly to the Board on specific efforts to promote collaboration with other training institutions. In concurring with several of the members' observations, the Executive Director emphasized the importance of pursuing collaboration in the planning stages and identifying the substantive issues where common interests and concerns are shared. In agreeing on the importance of providing incentives and identifying substantive areas where cooperation can be intelligent and useful, one member underscored that cooperation needs to fulfil the UNITAR mandate and also help the mandate of its partners. Another member added that it was important to ensure first and foremost good strategic programmes that could be further strengthened through collaboration, as opposed to first identifying collaborative partnerships.
11. **The Board took note of its discussions and the letter received by the Chairman from the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on 19 November 2014 on the proposed consolidation of the research and training institutes. The Board expressed appreciation that its views communicated at its Fifty-fourth Session were taken into consideration. The Board understood that enhancing synergies through cooperation by respecting the Institute's mandate and acting under existing authorities would not entail any structural changes to UNITAR. The Board expressed its support for management to further develop opportunities for collaborative initiatives that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of UNITAR programming and requested management to report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session.**
12. Under item 6, finance and budget, the Chairman invited the Finance Committee Chairman to introduce the Report of the Seventh Session of the Finance Committee (UNITAR/BT/FC/7/2). Under item 6a, Financial statements for the twelve-month period of the biennium 2012-2013 ended 31 December 2013, the Finance Committee Chairman referred to Annex 2 of the Board's documentation and summarized a number of positive financial developments, including the increase in income during the biennium of some \$1.2 million, a decrease in expenditures, liquidity improving slightly and cash on hand increasing by 11.9 per cent. The Finance Committee Chairman also recognized the generous non-earmarked voluntary contribution of EUR 1 million from the Algerian government which, although received in 2013, was recorded as 2014 income in accordance with the International Public Service Accounting Standards (IPSAS).
13. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee, commended management for the prudent management of resources, took note of the financial statements for the biennium 2012-2013 ended 31 December 2013, and expressed its gratitude to the Algerian government for its non-earmarked voluntary contribution and encouraged other donors to follow this example.**
14. Under item 6b, report on the application of the cost recovery approach, the Finance Committee Chairman reviewed the item's discussion at the Finance Committee and indicated that management is still under a transitional period with the new approach as some former projects were being managed by the previous formula. The Finance Committee Chairman also recalled the variable rates for direct service costs (DSC), from 6 per cent to 11 per cent, and noted that management has been able to recover all corporate costs during the first nine months of 2014 through the DSC and programme support cost (PSC) recovery methods. The Finance Committee Chairman highlighted some of the challenges that management is facing on applying the new approach, including determining DSC rates between the maximum of 11 per cent and the minimum of 6 per cent, and noted one instance where management applied an intermediate DSC rate of 8 per cent since the project pertained to a single procurement action. He said that

it would be good to have some flexibility in applying the DSC rate but that clear criteria would need to be established.

15. The Finance Committee Chairman also noted a specific challenge in relation to projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), since the GEF implementing agencies take a management fee, which in turn reduces the cost recovery rate that UNITAR, as a GEF executing agency, can charge to the project to a maximum of 10 per cent. He noted that while UNITAR has been able to address the matter in the short term, management needs to find a solution to this challenge in the long term. The Executive Director indicated that it may be useful to discuss with other UN GEF executing agencies on a common approach as to how such costs could be recovered.
16. In response to one member's request for clarification on the different DSC rates applied, the Executive Director noted that the rates apply to all of special purpose grants funds that UNITAR receives for its programming, with 11 per cent being applied to projects which are managed and implemented entirely by UNITAR and 6 per cent applied to funds which are then disbursed to partners such as national government agencies who have the responsibility for providing the relevant services. As an example, the Executive Director referred to the Institute's partners at the country level to implement actions related to programming in chemicals and waste management and that in such cases, only 6 per cent is applied to the funds disbursed to the respective agencies. The Finance Committee Chairman noted the instance that he cited where management applied a fee below the 11 per cent since management's services consisted of a single procurement action and noted the importance of flexibility on applying the rates with very clear criteria. One member agreed that flexibility is needed and that it would be important to determine justifications for the intermediate rates. The member also agreed that it would be useful to approach other GEF executing agencies. On the variable DSC rates, the Finance Committee Chairman recalled the exception based on the single action procurement and provided some examples of other hypothetical cases where it would be acceptable for management to apply an intermediate DSC rate, and that it would be important for management to avoid a rigid approach which could jeopardize funding from donors. On the GEF specific matter, the Executive Director was of the opinion that when a UN implementing agency passes GEF funds to a UN executing agency, it would be reasonable for the implementing agency to take a lower management fee since the executing agency is also bound by UN rules and procedures and therefore the GEF implementing agency would have a lower monitoring and reporting burden.
17. **The Board took note of management's report on the application of the cost recovery approach and commended management. The Board recognized the need for flexible application of direct service cost rates between a minimum of 6 per cent and a maximum of 11 per cent with clear criteria on applying the rates. The Board requested management to consult with other GEF executing agencies on how to find a more sustainable solution to recover costs for GEF-funded projects and to report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session.**
18. Under item 6c, Report of the Advisory Committee and Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Finance Committee Chairman highlighted a number of positive elements in the Advisory Committee report, such as the 4.2 per cent increase in income target in the proposed revision over the initial budget, an increase in expenditures although by a smaller margin, satisfaction with the cost recovery mechanism and the increase in non-earmarked reserves. The Finance Committee Chairman also noted that Advisory Committee had raised the issue of the external and internal audit and noted that while external audits have been undertaken regularly, there has not been an internal audit in a number of years. The Executive Director noted that the matter of audit would be covered in more detail under items 6e and 6f.

19. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and commended management of the favorable report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.**
20. Under item 6d, proposed revision of the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015, the Finance Committee Chairman noted that management has made some programme adjustments and noted the corresponding increase in some 4.2 per cent over the original 2014-2015 budget and that the proposed revision was being submitted on the basis that there would be no structural consolidation of the research and training institutes. He reported that staffing adjustments were minor and included, in addition to the recruitment for several posts, a correction to the costing of national and international staff since a sufficient amount of funds was not previously set aside for separation entitlements. He also recalled that the Board suspended the abolishment of a number of posts at the time the original budget was adopted pending the outcome of the proposed consolidation. Now that the consolidation matter is closed, the Finance Committee Chairman suggested that it may be useful to commission an independent functional review of posts given that there would be soon a new change to management's leadership and that the Executive Director had agreed.
21. One member requested clarification on the Hiroshima Office and its staffing. Another member commended management for the projected increase in revenue and expressed support for the suggestion that management commission an independent functional analysis or review of the staff and posts prior to the consideration of the next biennium budget. The Executive Director noted that the Hiroshima Office was established some 10 years ago in partnership with the Hiroshima Prefecture and that the office's staff and activities are funded largely from a grant from the Prefecture. In response to a question from the Finance Committee Chairman on the vacancy of the Partnership and Resource Mobilization post, the Executive Director mentioned that it was vacant due to financial constraints and that the function is currently covered by a senior fellow who is paid less than a staff member would be paid at the equivalent level. The Executive Director noted that as soon as funding permits the post would be filled.
22. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and adopted the proposed revision of the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015. The Board requested Management to commission an independent functional analysis of the UNITAR staffing and structure and to report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session prior to the consideration of the proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2016-2017.**
23. Under item 6e, external audit, the Finance Committee Chairman summarized the three main recommendations as recorded in the Report of the Board of Auditors, including clarifying the scope and definition of programme support costs and direct service costs, and to provide adequate information to donors with regard to the retention of project funds; to conduct prompt verification of those items in the inventory; and to consult with donors before of disposing of surplus funds. One member asked if there was a statutory obligation that UNITAR be audited by the Board of Auditors (BOA) and internal auditors. The Executive Director confirmed that all parts of the United Nations have to be audited by the BOA and that each part of the UN should either have its own internal audit service or to work with the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).
24. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and Report of the Board of Auditors, as well as Management's response as contained in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/353/Add1).**
25. Under item 6f, internal audit, the Finance Committee Chairman recalled that the matter was referred to in the Report of the Advisory Committee and noted that the Executive

Director felt that given the size of the Institute's budget, it would not be efficient to fund a full service internal and external audit, and that it would be important for the internal and external auditors to coordinate so that the present budget provision of \$113,000 for audit would be respected. The Executive Director mentioned that management had suggested last year to OIOS to discuss with the BOA and that the two audit teams decide on a division of labor with a view to avoiding overlap of services and not exceeding the budget provision. While this discussion was encouraging, OIOS later informed UNITAR that it was not responsible for arranging with the BOA a complementary approach and was not able to confirm that the actual cost would be within the budget provision. The Executive Director thought that it would be good management practice for the internal and external auditors to agree on a complementary approach.

26. One member suggested that management look at institutes within the United Nations of a relatively similar size to see how they manage funding the internal and external audit exercises. Another member found that internal audit was essential and that not having had an internal audit since 2006 could compromise the internal controls and could even have negative repercussions with regard to good governance and oversight. Several members supported the need for an internal audit, with one member considering the matter to be serious, another member asking how much a full-fledged OIOS audit of UNITAR would cost (i.e. how much more than the present budget provision of \$113,000), and another member, while concurring that it would be important to avoid duplicating the subject matter of audits, questioned if it was appropriate for UNITAR to tell OIOS and BOA to agree on how to do their audit undertakings. In response to a question on the frequency of the external audit, the Executive Director mentioned that UNITAR would need to have an audit of financial statements on an annual basis.
27. The Finance Committee Chairman asked management what the Board could do to help management be persuasive in terms of doing a more streamlined external audit or if there is a message that the Board could convey in that regard. The Executive Director noted that management has looked at the audit costs of the International Trade Centre, and that it would be good to look at the audit costs of other organizations in the UN of a similar size and nature as UNITAR. She suggested that it would be useful if the Finance Committee Chairman would meet directly with the BOA to convey the Board's concerns taking into consideration the Institute's budget limitations. One member added that such a discussion should not be presented as a condition, and that internal audit needed to be initiated now.
28. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee. The Board took note of its discussions and concluded that an internal audit shall be undertaken in 2015 and that a complimentary approach should be found so that the external and internal audit exercises avoid duplication. The Board requested the Chairman of the Finance Committee to discuss the matter directly with the Chairman of the Board of Auditors.**
29. Under item 6g, Umoja, the Finance Committee Chairman briefed the Board on the matter and the challenges that the introduction of Umoja as the UN Secretariat's new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system would present to UNITAR, particularly from the financial and human resource perspectives. The Finance Committee Chairman noted that given the constraints and the impossibility of introducing any exceptions at this stage to Umoja, management has looked into using alternative enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, such as the UNDP Atlas system. The committee recommended that the Board approve management's use of Atlas in the short-term and that management review the use of Umoja by other organizations and report to the Board at the Fifty-eight Session.
30. One member highlighted the large scale of the Umoja project and its complexity. While understanding management's preference to use Atlas in the short-term, the member asked for clarification on what the short-term would mean in terms of years and

suggested that the Board remain seized of this matter and should discuss it at the Fifty-sixth Session in 2015. The member asked management to clarify if using a different ERP system than Umoja would be a prejudice to the Institute's capacity to work together with the Secretariat and the other entities that will be using Umoja from 2015 onwards. He also asked if management could indicate what the similar research and training institutes such as UNSSC are doing and how much it would cost if management would use Atlas and then later switch to Umoja. Other questions were put forward for management to clarify if Umoja was designed for the entire UN system, including the UN autonomous institutes, and if UNITAR had the discretion to use an ERP other than Umoja taking into consideration the auditing of financial accounts, for instance.

31. The Executive Director provided a more thorough background on the issue and noted that at present, the UN Secretariat uses the Integrated Management and Information System (IMIS) as does a number of other large headquarter organizations, the peacekeeping missions and some of the smaller research and training institutes such as UNITAR; that IMIS is being phased out and replaced with Umoja, which has been designed to support all UN Secretariat entities; and that rollout of Umoja is scheduled to take some three years before being completed. She informed the Board that UNITAR is presently scheduled to be integrated into Umoja as of December 2015, but that preparations for such an integration would need to begin in December 2014 and that the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) has requested UNITAR to make a decision now. The Executive Director noted that the other major ERP being used by multiple UN agencies at the moment is the UNDP hosted system, Atlas, which is also used by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations University (UNU) and UN Women. The Executive Director noted that the two ERP systems are quite different in terms of their intended users, with Umoja intended to serve the Secretariat which is largely regular budget-funded while Atlas is designed to serve the 100 per cent voluntary funded organizations. The Executive Director emphasized that modifications to Umoja would be required since UNITAR has procedures and categories of staff that are not presently accommodated by Umoja. The Executive Director stated that she was advised that modifications could not be made to Umoja for at least three years.
32. On Atlas, the Executive Director informed that Board that UNITAR would be able to use the new 'light' version which would be limited largely to budget and staff management, and that while it was not yet know exactly what the recurrent cost for the use of Atlas would be, the Executive Director indicated that it would be less than what UNU currently pays (approximately \$168,000 per year) since payment is based on the number of staff users, and UNU has almost 150 staff as compared to 42 UNITAR staff. In addition to the annual user fee, UNITAR would be able to perform some services in-house that are currently done by UNOG, and would buy some related services from UNDP (e.g. treasury and payroll) for a total cost of less than \$250,000 per annum. The Executive Director compared this to some \$400,000 that UNOG has charged for these services in 2013, although she noted that UNITAR would still need to buy some minor location specific services from UNOG. While there would be a once-off installation cost for migration to Atlas, she said that UNDP has indicated that this cost would be a maximum of \$300,000 which could be spread over two years. She concluded by saying that the cost of moving to Atlas will not be greater than the current IMIS in the first two years, and there will be significant savings by year three. The Executive Director informed the Board that UNOG management has not been able to indicate yet what the installation and user costs of Umoja would be. She concluded by saying that it would be sensible to monitor the roll-out of Umoja closely and that if within three years modifications could be made to accommodate the Institute's special categories of staff and if the costs would be the same or lower than those of Atlas, then it would be reasonable to migrate to Umoja. The Executive Director emphasized that in contrast to the entire Secretariat which has to use Umoja, the autonomous, voluntary-funded organizations, including UNITAR, would not necessarily need to go to Umoja.

33. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and recommended that management use the UNDP Atlas system in the short-term taking into consideration the challenges and constraints that management presented in relation to Umoja. The Board decided to remain seized of the matter and requested management to report to the Board at the Fifty-sixth Session.**
34. The Finance Committee Chairman commended management and the secretariat for the excellent work and preparation of the budget and finance-related documents. The Chairman extended his appreciation to the Finance Committee Chairman for the reports on the various finance and budget items.
35. Under item 7, update on strategic partnerships, the Chairman announced that the Institute has concluded a number of partnerships since the last session. The Executive Director referred to the item's annotation and mentioned that management's strategy to engage with partners in all of its programming areas, noting that for the most part the Institute's expertise lies in the training and adult learning methodologies and that the subject matter expertise is generally provided by partners. She noted the new memoranda of understanding (MOUs) concluded with various partners include diplomatic academies, satellite and space related organizations as well as the European Organization for Nuclear Research, the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights and World Meteorological Organization to support the UNOSAT's work, and the Association of Local Governments in Nigeria and the West African Institute for Finance and Economic Management.
36. In response to a number of queries, the Executive Director clarified that the partnerships included in the item's annotation relate to the non-financial MOUs concluded over the past twelve months and that the Institute engages in a far greater number of partners, including financial ones. The Executive Director noted that the update is not intended to be interpreted a thorough, critical analysis of partnerships which are strategic as opposed to non-strategic. She noted that UNITAR has had or has some partnerships with the private sector, including Total and Veolia. She noted that while the Institute is open to engaging with the private sector, it has not been able to secure more partners from this sector and invited members to provide suggestions of entities that would be useful for management to explore. In relation to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the Executive Director mentioned that some of those partners listed in the annotation are NGOs and that, in addition to the list, management has concluded a number of agreements with NGOs for programme implementation. The Executive Director also cited the informal partnership with the Assistant Secretary-General for the Post 2015 Agenda, UNDP, UN Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), UN Women and UNSSC to work together on the introduction of the 2015 Development Agenda at the country level including with civil society and government. In response to a query from one member for management to work more regularly with NGOs, the Executive Director made reference to the network of 12 UNITAR affiliated international training centres for local actors (CIFAL) which are local NGOs or parastatal training centres that benefit from UNITAR expertise and knowledge-related services. **The Board took note of its observations on the update on strategic partnerships.**
37. Under item 8a, 2012-2013 Programme Performance Report, the Chairman recalled that a similar report was presented to the Board at the Fifty-second Session for the 2010-2011 budget and noted that the report is an important element of the Institute's accountability framework. The Executive Director commended the Planning, Performance and Results Manager for the excellent work. The Manager introduced the report and noted that most of the planned accomplishments were met or surpassed based on management's self-assessment exercise. He noted that the nature of the outcomes varied widely with a large

proportion related to the strengthening of individual or institutional capacities under the Institute's major thematic work areas. Over the biennium, the Institute provided training and related knowledge-sharing services to over 50,000 beneficiaries and that virtually three-quarters of the beneficiaries came from developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to trained beneficiaries, the Institute also delivered 360 maps and activation reports for the humanitarian community through its UNOSAT programming. Before concluding, the Manager reviewed the actual key performance indicator (KPI) values for 2013. The Executive Director added that the number of submissions for the external quality certification of e-Learning courses is growing and, in relation to the gender ratio, the Institute needs to continue to work towards improving the gender balance.

38. Members raised a number of observations and questions on the gender ratio, geographic representation for Latin America and Caribbean, the methods used to set KPI targets and some of the actual measures, how UNITAR ensures that it delivers quality in its learning-related programming and how UNITAR prioritizes its programming to ensure relevance. One member observed that there may be a correlation between the gender ratio and the breakdown of beneficiaries by affiliation, noting that a large number of beneficiaries are from national governments and that the range of women working in this sector tends to be rather low in many developing countries. She suggested that it may be useful to leverage the Post 2015 process in order to reach out more widely to women beneficiaries perhaps through a partnership with UN Women. One member also observed that the report can be a useful fundraising and management decision-making tool as it provides an overview of the aggregated results across the various programming areas.
39. The Manager noted that the UNITAR management committee discusses and sets the targets at the outset of the year and reviews progress regularly. He mentioned that some of the KPI targets are based on the actual measures from the previous year, but that management is reconsidering the approach. For instance, 2014 beneficiary targets are set based on the planned beneficiary outputs in the programme budget as opposed to constantly seeking growth in numbers that may not be aligned with the programme budget. The Manager noted that over the past two biennia, there has been emphasis on growing in terms of numbers with somewhat less attention paid to monitoring the concrete outcomes that take shape as a result from programming. For the learning-related programming he mentioned that UNITAR is now randomly sampling participants who have completed events to determine the extent to which knowledge and skills from training have been applied. The Manager felt that there was progress to be made, including undertaking independent evaluations and studies on the impact of our work, but that resource constraints presented obstacles to undertaking independent evaluation exercises.
40. In reference to the SGI indicator, the Manager noted that the term referred to self-generated income which was used in the past and was a key component of the 2010-2102 Strategic Plan, but that management was now tracking the percentage of income from fee-based courses since SGI proved to be a rather elusive concept to measure. The reserves and fund balances indicator has also been monitored over the years, with management now placing much more emphasis on not only maintaining balances but increasing the amount of non-earmarked reserves. On quality, the Manager recalled the Institute's internal Quality Assurance Framework which applies to learning-related events and the dual process of self-assessment by programmes and independent peer review by the Quality Assurance Committee. He noted that need was the first standard and that ensuring that programmes respond to this criterion is sometimes challenging. Finally, on geographic representation, the Manager noted that the number of beneficiaries from the Latin American and the Caribbean region has been the lowest of the developing country regions for a number of years. The establishment of the Brasilia Office was designed in part to address this geographic imbalance and since the office's closure in 2012 new efforts need to be deployed to reach out this this group of countries. The Executive

Director added that another variable that affects the geographic spread of UNITAR beneficiaries is the languages in which training is delivered and that management is increasing its efforts to diversify languages in training delivery. On prioritizing training, the Executive Director noted the constraint of funding and the challenge of aligning need with available funding.

41. The Chairman recognized the important progress that the Institute has achieved in the area of performance management and the measurement of key results, and commended management in this respect.
42. **The Board took note of its observations on the Programme Performance Report for the Biennium 2012-2013, commended management for the level detail and analysis on the presentation of the results, requested management to prioritize identifying funding for independent evaluation in 2015 and report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session.**
43. Under item 8b, draft 2014 progress report, the Executive Director referred to the progress report under Annex 9. She noted the increase in the number of beneficiaries in 2014 over the same period in 2013 as well as other statistics such as the geographic and gender distribution of beneficiaries and the number of events. In reference to the number of certificates issued for the learning-related events, the Executive Director noted that management had revised the Institute's certification policy with clearer and more rigorous criteria and that as a consequence, the number of certifications is down as compared to previous years. She also noted the scholarships issued to a number of participants from developing countries to take part in the Institute's core diplomatic training in Geneva and New York with the generous support from the Algerian and Swedish governments.
44. The Executive Director reviewed a number of key results under the five programme objectives which would not be reported under item 8c, programming highlights. With respect to strengthening multilateralism, the Executive Director highlighted the delegates training and mentioned upcoming training to prepare delegates for the Lima Conference of the Parties under the Climate Change Convention and the 2015 Hyogo Framework of Action 2. Under promoting economic development and social inclusion, she drew the Board's attention to the project in Algeria on training trainers from different ministries and agencies on adult training methodologies in the area of entrepreneurship development for young graduates. The Executive Director mentioned that a significant unintended result from the project has been strengthened collaboration across the Algerian agencies on the training of young entrepreneurs through the use of modern social media and networking tools such as Facebook. The Executive Director noted that the other UN agencies working in Algeria have expressed interest in the UNITAR approach. In the area of environmental sustainability she mentioned, in addition to climate change and green economy, chemical waste management programming to support countries in the early ratification of the Minamata Protocol on Mercury and the capacity development project in Ghana to identify and destroy over 150 tons of PCBs. In the area of promoting sustainable peace, the Executive Director mentioned new cooperation with the Training Department of Peacekeeping and Political Affairs to certify national training academies in the training of UN protocols and conventions pertaining to peacekeeping, as well as on-going training of trainers from five peacekeeping training centers in Africa and Asia and a new Master Degree Programme in cooperation with the University of Catalonia, with enrollment more than doubling from 2013 figures. Finally, under improving resilience and humanitarian assistance, the Executive Director noted that UNOSAT would be making a short presentation on its rapid mapping and highlighted the training in the area of disaster risk reduction in partnership with the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and UNDP.
45. The Manager of the Planning, Performance and Results Section noted that in addition to the achievements realized under the high-level programme objectives, management has

also produced important results under the functional objective areas, including the strengthening of quality and effectiveness, as well as branding and communication (e.g. launching of the new UNITAR website). The Manager noted that an evaluation was performed in the third quarter to review the reaction from programmes on the services provided by leadership and the various support services. While the report had not been finalized, he noted that the results indicated general satisfaction by the programmes on how timely, adequate and constructive support services had been provided over the first six months of 2014, although there was some variation in programme reaction according to the type of support service. He indicated that the report would be shared with the Board once it is finalized.

46. In commending management for its training, several members emphasized the 'R' in the UNITAR name and stressed that management needs to be more ambitious in the promotion and enhancement of research on questions related to the Institute's mandate, mission and programming. Another member suggested that it might be useful to undertake an external review of the programme/curriculum areas by leading academics and other experts, in addition to analysis on needs and solutions, and this could be one way in which management could enhance the research dimension. Looking towards the future and drawing a parallel with item 7, partnerships, two members suggested that programming could be further enhanced with more linkages to research and through increased cooperation with the private sector and in other areas such as telecommunications and cybercrime. Acknowledging that the Institute's programming is demand-driven with a particular focus on developing countries, one member also recognized the important fact that UNITAR is donor-dependent and that the type and nature of UNITAR programming needs to be in alignment with development cooperation priorities.
47. The Executive Director acknowledged that the Institute's research capacity is very limited and focused for the most part in the area of knowledge systems and learning methodologies, and in the field of geospatial imagery to promote development and humanitarian assistance. Rather than increasing the Institute's capacity to engage in research in-house, the Executive Director thought that UNITAR should work to better link with other entities doing the research and recognized the presence of UNU and the importance of the university in terms of serving as a bridge between the United Nations and the academic community. She acknowledged the observations from one member that it is vital for UNITAR to keep up with cutting edge thinking. The Executive Director also acknowledged that UNITAR could collaborate with UNU or other entities in the review of some of its training programmes such as peacekeeping or the environment where UNU has academic capacity. With regard to telecommunications, she indicated that UNITAR has had cooperation with the International Telecommunications Union, although acknowledged that cooperation with larger agencies of this sort has often proven more challenging as they often have their own training programmes. She highlighted UNISDR and the UNCC: Learn as examples where fruitful cooperation has emerged when UNITAR uses research undertaken by other UN entities as the basis for its training-related programming. Finally, she acknowledged that having UNITAR headquarters in Geneva has been very helpful to nurturing partnerships and collaborative initiatives with other parts of the UN family engaged in research directly.
48. **The Board took note of its observations on the draft 2014 Progress Report, recommended management to enhance partnerships with research entities, including nongovernmental sectors, and recognized the importance of focusing on research in areas where UNITAR has a comparative advantage.**
49. Under item 8c, programme highlights, the Chairman indicated that in addition to the three presentations announced in the agenda, there would be an additional presentation on UNOSAT rapid mapping. On item 8c (i) Mr. Angus MacKay, Manager of the Climate Change Programme, presented the early results from the launch of a massive open

online course (MOOC) on climate change, part of a One UN partnership on climate change learning (UN CC:Learn) which groups 30 organizations and for which UNITAR provides the secretariat. The course was launched in February 2014 and has had close to 10,000 registrations worldwide. Significantly these registrations come from all 195 parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, including all 48 LDCs. The course provides a complete introduction to all matters on climate change and will shortly be launched in French and Spanish. The objective is to reach a global audience of around 20,000 by the end of 2012-2015 biennium.

50. In response to one member's request on interaction with moderators, the Manager confirmed that the course was being administered as a self-paced, non-moderated course. The Manager noted that while the course is run online, there is a downloadable version and that the course is linked to all of the UNCC: Learn partner websites in addition to the principal UNCC: Learn website. He noted that while the course is announced through university networks and other contacts, more perhaps could be done to spread visibility on the course. One member offered to follow-up with the TERI University in India.
51. In response to another member's query the course's content, the Manager indicated that the subject matter expertise lies in the different UN institutions, such as the WMO, UNEP and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as regards climate science, and that UNITAR's expertise is packaging and delivering the content through the e-course platform. The Executive Director noted the strategic importance of the UNCC: Learn partnership and acknowledged that small organizations such as UNITAR can play an important convening role and that there are other areas in which UNITAR could potentially play such a role given its training-specific mandate. In response to another member's reference to next year's Conference of the Parties scheduled for Paris, the Executive Director noted that UNITAR is actively engaged in providing pre-COP orientation including at this year's conference in Lima.
52. Under item 8c (ii), Mr. Achim Halpaap, Senior Manager of the Environmental Governance Programme, presented green economy as a new programming area at UNITAR which seeks to help countries advance macro-economic policy analysis and reforms as a vehicle to furthering sustainable development. The Manager reviewed the efforts undertaken to launch programming in this field and provided a status update and lessons learned to date. The Manager also presented a short video message from Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, who thanked and commended UNITAR for its early action to advance green economy learning and its participation and contribution to the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy, "PAGE", a joint initiative of UNEP, ILO, UNIDO, UNDP and UNITAR. The Manager highlighted the importance that environmental sustainability considerations have become an integral part of thinking about macro-economic policies and that this approach is now commonly referred to as the green economy. He noted that the Institute's programming in this field commenced in 2012 with the development of e-Learning course on the green economy in partnership with UNEP and subsequently led to include face-to-face training sessions for the Development Cooperation Division of the European Commission, and that these initial activities were instrumental in placing UNITAR in the PAGE partnership in 2013. In addition to online and face-to-face learning, UNITAR's green economy activities include working jointly with PAGE partners, policy dialogues and partnerships with academic and other learning institutions to develop a strategic approach to green economy learning at the national level and to integrate green economy into their curriculums. Some two-thirds of green economy beneficiaries come from developing countries with a ranged of employment and civil society sectors represented. Results and budgeted resources for this area of programming have grown over the past two years, with training planned to be delivered in 2015 to some 1,400 beneficiaries with a budget of some \$800,000. The Manager concluded his presentation with some reflections on lessons learned from incubating a new programme area and noted the challenge to mobilize up-front resources to incubate

new programming, the need to analyze international policy trends and identify a learning niche for UNITAR, ensure quality as well as trust and credibility with donors, and the value of internal reward for entrepreneurship and risk-taking.

53. Several members expressed interest on the incubation element of the presentation, with one member asking if UNITAR could receive crowd funding and another member noting the parallels to discussions on future programming. The Manager acknowledged that crowd funding could be an interesting avenue to explore. In relation to the lessons learned from programme incubation, the Manager noted that there is much initial investment required at the outset and that the investment translates to opportunity costs which need to be mitigated with some risk assessment. In response to questions on registration modalities for the course and plans to develop a MOOC, the Manager noted the existence of national, in-depth learning experiences together with the global introductory course currently administered on a fee basis. He noted that there were many more potential learners around the world and that plans to develop a MOOC are based on the Institute reaching out to fill this learning gap. The Executive Director added the benefit of MOOCs for learning about topics on a relatively basic level. In contrast, if the aim is to experience more in-depth learning with the purpose to prepare a national plan or policy, for instance, she indicated that interactive facilitated learning would be more appropriate. The Manager indicated that a French and Spanish language version of the course would be available in 2015.
54. On the question related to the role of the Board in future programming, the Executive Director emphasized the need to identify the nexus between what beneficiaries need, what donors are prepared to fund and UNITAR capacity to deliver based on some degree of expertise or understanding of the programming area. The Executive Director noted the importance of the Board to signal any areas that management has overlooked and also stopping UNITAR from engaging in areas that may not be relevant or where UNITAR may not have the required capacity. One member concurred and emphasized that UNITAR programmes should be based on or related to the adopted documents by the United Nations.
55. Under [item 8c \(iii\)](#), the Executive Director briefed the Board on the Post 2015 initiative, including the series of awareness raising briefings delivered in 2014 to the delegates in Geneva and New York on the 2015 Development Agenda background, process and that areas that the agenda might cover. The Executive Director indicated that the next phase of the process would be even more interesting following agreement on the Post 2015 Development Agenda in September 2015. She noted that the universal nature of the agenda and the monitoring of the agenda's implementation will be of great interest since all countries will be concerned, as well as civil society, the private sector and academia. The Executive Director emphasized that the Institute can play an important role in this understanding at the country level, and that this could represent an important and strategic area for UNITAR programming.
56. Mr. Einar Bjorgo, Manager of UNOSAT, presented a short update on recent activities in the area of satellite imagery and analysis and concluded his presentation with a short video on activities in Chad. He noted that 50 per cent of UNOSAT's activities relate to satellite mapping to support UN agencies and Member States, and 50 per cent training and capacity development. He noted that virtually all of UNOSAT's training is designed and delivered with internal capacity and involves a highly practical, hands-on approach with applications to the mapping capacities. The Manager reviewed some recent examples of mapping activities, including one example on assisting the World Health Organization to examine areas where affected countries have established Ebola treatment centres. The Manager also presented a joint initiative with UNESCO to review damage to cultural heritage sites in Syria through detailed satellite images.

57. In response to one member's request for additional information on the satellite imagery, the Manager confirmed that UNOSAT only uses publically available satellite information from commercial or open sources, and that for natural disasters much of the imagery is available through the Space Charter. He noted that in other cases, most of the imagery is purchased from commercial sources often with discounts. The Manager indicated that UNITAR would not like to have its own satellite since there are many high performing satellites and good collaboration with a wide range of service providers including with the private sector. In response to one member's request for additional information on the partnership with CERN, the Manager indicated that it is a very beneficial partnership to UNITAR, with CERN providing a very low-cost premises for the UNOSAT offices and IT infrastructure. In response to one question on cooperation with municipal governments, the Manager noted that until now, most cooperation has been at the national level although depending on the specific cases there may be some cooperation with local governments. In response to another question on providing information freely to governments, the Manager confirmed that UNOSAT only responds to requests from a UN sister agency or a government and that the information is posted on the UNOSAT website and made freely available to the network. On the Chad project, the Manager indicated that the project developed on the basis of cooperation with UNHCR in the context of the Darfur conflict and the need for the agency to identify water resources for refugees fleeing into Chad. Subsequent to that specific instance of cooperation, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation then approached the Institute to develop a much broader project for the national government of Chad. One member suggested that it would be useful to have an on-site visit to UNOSAT perhaps at the next Board session.
58. Under item 8c, **the Board took note of its observations on the programming highlights in the fields of climate change, green economy, Post 2015 and UNOSAT, and commended management for the quality of the presentations.**
59. Under item 9, elections, **the Board elected Ms. Taous Feroukhi as the next Chair of the Board and Mr. Thomas Fitschen as the next Vice Chair, with the terms effective from 1 January 2015. The Board recognized the continuing chairmanship of Mr. Quiñonez of the Finance Committee and elected Mr. Alexandre Fasel to the Finance Committee.**
60. Under item 10, adoption of the report and setting of the dates of the Fifty-sixth Session, **the Board agreed to adopt the report of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Fifty-fifth Session as a follow-up to the session and on the basis of a draft report to be circulated to members for their endorsement. The Board approved the key recommendations and conclusions as attached as Annex I. The Board agreed that the Fifty-sixth Session shall take place in November 2015 and that management shall consult with members on the specific dates.**
61. Under item 11, any other business, one member asked for an update on the recruitment process of the next Executive Director. The Executive Director noted that the process was ongoing and that it was hoped to have a decision before the end of 2014. The Executive Director also noted that in accordance with the Statute, the Board would be consulted by the Secretary-General prior to the appointment of the next Executive Director. The Executive Director indicated that she has offered to stay until her successor arrives.
62. The Chairman expressed his enormous privilege of having presided over the Board since January 2010 and recognized the contributions from all trustees to the oversight and vision of the Institute. He also recognized the former Executive Director, the present Executive Director and the Secretary of the Board. The Chairman characterized the present period as the UNITAR moment, with 50 years of service to the United Nations Member States, with demonstrated results that UNITAR contributes to making positive changes to the lives of countless individuals, and with a clear mandate and mission that are ever so important to development.

---

63. The Executive Director recognized the contribution of the Chairman and all Board members for their service and commitment to the Institute.

64. The session was adjourned.

## Annex I

### Key conclusions and recommendations from the Fifty-fifth Session

#### Item 5, Follow-up from the Fifty-fourth Session

##### Item 5a, Consolidation of the United Nations research and training institutes

The Board took note of its discussions and the letter received by the Chairman from the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on 19 November 2014 on the proposed consolidation of the research and training institutes. The Board expressed appreciation that its views communicated at its Fifty-fourth Session were taken into consideration. The Board understood that enhancing synergies through cooperation by respecting the Institute's mandate and acting under existing authorities would not entail any structural changes to UNITAR. The Board expressed its support for management to further develop opportunities for collaborative initiatives that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of UNITAR programming and requested management to report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth session.

#### Item 6, Finance and budget

##### Item 6a, Financial statements for the biennium 2012-2013 ended 31 December 2013

The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee, commended management for the prudent management of resources, took note of the financial statements for the biennium 2012-2013 ended 31 December 2013, and expressed its gratitude to the Algerian government for its non-earmarked voluntary contribution and encouraged other donors to follow this example.

##### Item 6b, Report on the application of the new cost recovery approach

The Board took note of management's report on the application of the cost recovery approach and commended management. The Board recognized the need for flexible application of direct service cost rates between a minimum of 6 per cent and the maximum of 11 per cent with clear criteria on applying the rates. The Board requested management to consult with other Global Environment Facility (GEF) executing agencies on how to find a more sustainable solution to recover costs for GEF-funded projects and to report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session.

##### Item 6c, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and commended management of the favorable report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

##### Item 6d, Proposed revision of the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015

The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and adopted the proposed revision of the Programme Budget for the Biennium 2014-2015. The Board requested management to commission an independent functional analysis of the UNITAR staffing and structure and to report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session prior to the consideration of the proposed Programme Budget for the Biennium 2016-2017.

##### Item 6e, External audit

The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and Report of the Board of Auditors, as well as management's response as contained in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/353/Add1).

**Item 6f, Internal audit**

The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee. The Board took note of its discussions and concluded that an internal audit shall be undertaken in 2015 and that a complimentary approach should be found so that the external and internal audit exercises avoid duplication. The Board requested the Chairman of the Finance Committee to discuss the matter directly with the Chairman of the Board of Auditors.

**Item 6g, Umoja**

The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and recommended that management use the UNDP Atlas system in the short-term taking into consideration the challenges and constraints that management presented in relation to Umoja. The Board decided to remain seized of the matter and requested management to report on the matter at its Fifty-sixth Session.

**Item 7, Update on strategic partnerships**

The Board took note of its observations on the update on strategic partnerships.

**Item 8, Programme Planning and Performance****Item 8a, 2012-2013 Programme Performance Report**

The Board took note of its observations on the Programme Performance Report for the Biennium 2012-2013, commended management for the level detail and analysis on the presentation of the results and requested management to prioritize identifying the funding for the funding independent evaluation in 2015 and report to the Board at its Fifty-sixth Session.

**Item 8b, Draft 2014 Progress Report**

The Board took note of its observations on the draft 2014 Progress Report, recommended management to enhance partnerships with research entities, including nongovernmental sectors, and recognized the importance of focusing on research in areas where UNITAR has a comparative advantage.

**Item 8c, Programme highlights**

The Board took note of its observations on the programming highlights in the fields of climate change, green economy, Post 2015 and UNOSAT, and commended management for the quality of the presentations.

**Item 9, Elections**

The Board elected Ms. Taous Feroukhi as the Chair of the Board and Mr. Thomas Fitschen as Vice Chair of the Board effective 1 January 2015. The Board recognized the continuing chairmanship of Mr. Quiñonez of the Finance Committee and elected Mr. Alexandre Fasel to the Finance Committee.