

Board of Trustees

Sixty-Second Session

18-19 November 2021

UNITAR/BT/62/6

25 January 2022

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) convened from 18 to 19 November 2021 for its Sixty-Second Session. A list of the session's main conclusions and recommendations, as adopted at the end of the session, is attached as Annex I.
2. The following members of the Board were present or represented at the session:

Trustees:

His Excellency Mr. Ali Ben Feitas Al-Amarri

Ms. Diana Chávez

His Excellency Mr. Luis Gallegos (Chair)

His Excellency Mr. Gennady Gatilov

Mr. Nikolaj Gilbert

Her Excellency Ms. Terhi Hakala

Her Excellency Ms Anna Jardfelt, represented by Mr. Oscar Ekéus, designated alternate

Her Excellency Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan

Dr. Deisi Kusztra

His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber

Dr. Yukie Osa

His Excellency Mr. Indra Mani Pandey

Dr. Patti Phillips

Her Excellency Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza

His Excellency Mr. Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg

Ex Officio:

Mr. Nikhil Seth, Executive Director, UNITAR

Secretary of the Board:

Mr. Brook Boyer, UNITAR (also in his capacity as Director, Division for Strategic Planning and Performance)

Observers – Other organizations:

Dr. Cecile Aptel, Deputy Director, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

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

Mr. Paul Ladd, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Ms. Shen Xiaomeng, Vice Rector in Europe, United Nations University

Observers – UNITAR:

Mr. Mukul Bholra, Director, The Defeat-NCD Partnership

Mr. Einar Bjorgo, Director, Division for Satellite Analysis and Applied Research

Ms. Marina I. Dinca Vasilescu, Director, Division for Operations

Mr. Rabih El-Haddad, Director, Division for Multilateral Diplomacy

Ms. Ana Figueira, Personal Assistant, Office of the Executive Director

Mr. Jonas Haertle, Chief, Office of the Executive Director

Mr. Evariste Karambizi, Director, Division for Peace

Mr. Ruediger Kuehr, Head, UNITAR Bonn Office

Ms. Mihoko Kumamoto, Director, Division for Prosperity

Mr. Angus MacKay, Director, Division for Peace

Mr. Alexander Mejia, Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion

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

Mr. Jorge Ocana, Manager, Chemicals and Waste Management Programme Unit

Ms. Trisha Riedy, Manager, Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy Programme Unit

Mr. Marco Suazo, Head, New York Office

Mr. Joel Thalla, Chief, Finance and Budget Unit

3. Under item 1, Opening of the session, the Chair welcomed the Trustees to the session and extended a particularly warm welcome to His Excellency Dr. Ali Bin Fetais A-Marri, Former Attorney General of the State of Qatar; Mr. Nikolaj Gilbert, President and CEO of PATH; Her Excellency, Ms. Anna Jardfelt, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva (represented today by Mr. Oscar Ekéus); His Excellency Mr. Indra Mani Pandey, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva; and Her Excellency Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza, Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations, New York (online), who the Secretary-General appointed to the Board in 2021. The Chair also welcomed observers to the session, including representative of other United Nations research and training institutes and UNITAR directors and other staff.
4. The Executive Director also welcomed Trustees to the session. He provided a snapshot view of the state of UNITAR since the Board's last session and a glimpse into what Management hoped to achieve in the years ahead. He noted that COVID-19, climate change and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) probably define the recent past, the present and the immediate future. He referred to the growth in budget and number of beneficiaries as a simple yardstick for measuring the footprint and health of UNITAR, and noted that UNITAR does not receive any support from the United Nations regular budget. He recalled the Resource Mobilization Strategy that the Board welcomed in 2017 and its targeted 6 per cent annual growth, and indicated that UNITAR appeared to be in a good place with its present, projected budget of \$72.5 million and prudent budget management with some 11 months of operating expenditure. He expressed his anticipation that the session would bring insight from collective reflection on the road ahead for reaching a new plateau of financial stability with a more diverse funding base. He then provided brief updates on some of the highlights of the thematic and crosscutting programme pillars. He noted that the strategic framework which comes to an end in 2021 has provided a very strong basis for UNITAR's work and that he looked forward to important discussions for successor arrangements, indicating that internal thinking and the independent evaluation pointed to its continuing validity given the SDG framework, but perhaps with additional focus on learning around COVID-19, other health-related issues and climate change learning. He also noted the importance of helping to bridge the digital divide and learning around reducing inequalities. He indicated that adjusting the current strategic framework with these tweaks and emphasis placed on health, climate change, digital divide and inequalities would provide a sound basis for the framework's continued validity for the period from 2022 to 2026. Linked to the strategic framework, the Executive Director said that the Institute's future, at least for the next five years, would depend critically on how successful it can mobilize pooled and flexible funding and by decentralizing its funding strategy to the country level, by building stronger partnerships with the private sector and developing space for hosted partnerships, and he looked forward to reflections by the Board on this strategic direction. The Executive Director recognized the importance of staffing and maintaining an adequate balance between regular contracts and other contractual arrangements, and to adapt to funding realities while retaining competitiveness and remaining a socially responsible employer. Finally, the Executive Director stated the need to continue to understand as best as possible what impacts and changes result from the work of the Institute's programming, and that evaluation plays an important and strategic role in this process to support accountability to donors and partners, and to provide opportunities for learning and quality improvement and to inform future decisions. **The Board took note of the introductory remarks.**
5. Under item 2, Adoption of the agenda, the Chair introduced the provisional agenda as proposed by the Executive Director in accordance with the Board's rules of procedure. **The Board adopted the agenda as proposed.**
6. Under item 3, Organization of work, the Chair proposed that the Board conduct its business according to the schedule in the item's annotation. **The Board agreed and adopted the organization of work.**
7. Under item 4, Membership matters, the Chair announced that the Secretary-General had appointed five new Trustees as announced in the session's opening. **The Board welcomed the new Trustees.**

8. Under item 5a, Update on UNITAR response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair reflected on how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect society in different ways and to different degrees. He recalled the Board's discussion on the matter at its Sixty-First Session last year and Management's efforts to respond by converting in-person events to online delivery, as well as by addressing COVID-19 as part of the Institute's programme portfolio, with some 50 events including COVID or its implications as part of training or knowledge sharing. He drew the Board's attention to Management's annotation on the matter, which was also shared with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in conjunction with the annual consultation on the UNITAR programme budget submission.
9. The Executive Director reported that UNITAR undertook changes to programming and operations to ensure, firstly, staff safety and welfare, and to convert face-to-face training for online delivery and to have COVID specific response initiatives, with at least 59 programme activities dealing with the pandemic in one dimension or another. He cited examples, including a report on COVID-19 in detention centres and what happens to the COVID-19 response with people suffering given the relationship to non-communicable diseases. He informed the Board that UNITAR was in the process of undertaking an independent evaluation on COVID-19 responses and shared several of the preliminary findings, as contained in the item's annotation. The Executive Director emphasized that as a self-funded project entity, UNITAR's programme survival depends on mobilizing funding. He assessed business continuity considering COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions as satisfactory, although he recognized that UNITAR has not been as successful in reaching beneficiaries from countries in special situations and vulnerable groups in relative terms in comparison with the past. Looking towards the future, the Executive Director expressed interest in having reflections with the Board on strategy, partnerships and resource mobilization for the next several years, and suggestions on how UNITAR can make its business model even more resilient. He indicated that UNITAR continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation both at its Headquarters and its outposted offices.
10. The Board welcomed UNITAR's performance and business metrics in light of the pandemic and was encouraged by the broadening and reprofiling of programmes over the past two years while showing resilience and adaptation during the pandemic. The challenges of being a self-funded project entity were noted, but it was also noted that this could be seen as an advantage for UNITAR in that it helps the Institute remain relevant and innovative. On financing, mobilizing more donors including from the private sector was positive, yet at the same time it was important to recognize that the majority of funding was coming from ten or so donors, and that it was important to work to further increase the donor landscape. In addition to thematic issues highlighted from the Executive Director in the opening session, the importance of the peace portfolio, including peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy, was mentioned. The UNITAR Bonn Office was recognized as an important presence, including the integration of the Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) Programme from the United Nations University to UNITAR. It was also noted that the creation of the UN Bonn Global Sustainability Information Centre which aims to serve as a one stop shop for information, engagement and collaboration between the UN and diverse stakeholders on the topic of global sustainability could be beneficial to UNITAR.
11. The Executive Director thanked Trustees for their reflections and indicated that he looked forward to a full discussion in conjunction with item 5c of the agenda. The Executive Director clarified that the majority of UNITAR beneficiaries come from developing countries, accounting for some 80 per cent of learners, yet the reach to beneficiaries from countries in special situations (or the most distressed countries) needs to increase. **The Board took note of Management's update and the observations made on UNITAR's response to the COVID-19 crisis.**
12. Under items 5b and 5c, Follow-up on recommendations of the Mid-term Evaluation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework, and proposed extension and adjustments to the 2018-2021 strategic framework, the Chair recalled that at its Sixty-First Session, the Board discussed the report of the Mid-term Evaluation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework and requested Management to report to the Board on the implementation of the recommendations at its Sixty-Second Session. Management also organized a virtual retreat in early 2021, with some of the retreat's planned actions/takeaways reflecting the evaluation's recommendations.

13. The Executive Director provided an assessment of where the Institute is, based on the results of the independent evaluation of the strategic framework. He noted the importance for UNITAR to grow its profile; engage in strategic communications; replicate successful projects; improve linkages with the UN system and the resident coordinator system at the country level; keep partners informed and continue strategic alignment with the SDG agenda; develop new partnerships and programming, including in the areas of public health and digital divide; promote more integrated approaches and diversify multilingualism in programme delivery; focus more on impact through evaluation and impact stories; focus on multi-year projects, vulnerable groups (e.g. aging, persons living with disabilities) gender empowerment; focus on training of trainers; and promote knowledge sharing within UNITAR. The Executive Director also summarized some of the outcomes of the staff retreat, including the need to revise the communications strategy, define the elements of health for UNITAR programming, develop a digital strategy for UNITAR, provide more space for innovation and promote spirit of inclusivity in UNITAR, amongst others. He also mentioned the need to keep the momentum in training diplomats and other stakeholders in the area of climate change. In the area of resource mobilization and recognizing the reluctance of some donors to provide loosely earmarked funding, the Executive Director mentioned the need for UNITAR to secure more pooled funding; access funds at the decentralized, country-level; strengthen cooperation with the private sector, including the private sector in developing countries; and consider hosted partnerships.
14. Trustees made a number of observations, including the possibility of pursuing partnerships with UN agencies (e.g. Food and Agriculture Organization on awareness raising around the concept of one health); looking at more innovative, flexible ways of working with partners at the country level; and considering (or continuing with) topics such as the social and economic impacts of COVID-19; science diplomacy; cybersecurity; anticorruption human rights and sustainable development; green energy; development of the arctic region; expanding network of project offices; promoting the principles of multilingualism; and promoting knowledge about the UN system. The Institute's effective response to COVID-19 was recognized, particularly on the methodological side of programming by converting in-person training to online delivery, yet the funding structure was a clear shortfall, and this inevitably impacted the Institute's reach to countries in special situations. Noting the visibility of the Institute at the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties of the Climate Change Convention, UNITAR's improvement in communications was acknowledged, as was the inherent link between communications and resource mobilization, and the need to shift from a reactive to a proactive approach. On resource mobilization and the aim to strengthen pooled funding and non-earmarked funding, an observation was made that often the choice is either earmarked funding or no funding at all, and that it would be important for UNITAR to continue to seize opportunities to mobilize earmarked funds, as for many donors this is the only source that can be leveraged. On extending and adjusting the strategic framework, it was suggested that UNITAR look at subnational and local levels in its training and capacity development programming, as well as in its efforts to mobilize resources. On expanding the framework to areas of health and digitization, it was suggested that UNITAR seize the opportunity of organizations based locally in Geneva.
15. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its observations, provided additional context to the challenges Management faced in mobilizing resources for much needed programmes in which earmarked funding may not be available, took note of the thematic topics to address or to continue addressing, and to strengthen the communications strategy. He assured the Board that UNITAR would continue to pursue earmarked funding in parallel to seeking to open new funding windows and mentioned that he looked forward to seeking flexible arrangements for funding. The Chair drew the Board's attention to Annex I of the documentation. **The Board took note of Management's follow-up on the recommendations from the evaluation of the 2018-2021 strategic framework and agreed to extend the current framework to cover the period from 2022 to 2025, with the understanding that the Board's observations would be incorporated into the strategic framework document and circulated to the Board as a follow-up to the session.**
16. Under [item 6](#), Risk assessment report, the Chair recalled that the Board at its Sixty-First Session and in consideration of the conditions and risk assessment criteria of hosted partnerships, requested Management to include risk assessment as a standing item on the Board's agenda in future sessions. He mentioned that the Institute had introduced enterprise risk management (ERM) into its accountability and internal controls framework in 2018, with the ERM policy that the Board approved subsequent to a recommendation from the UN Board of Auditors. The Director for

Strategic Planning and Performance reviewed the purpose and structure of the report, and noted that it contained summary assessments of 20 risks from the risk register. He noted that risk management at UNITAR was a maturing function and that Management planned to undertake a risk management maturity exercise in 2022 and to continue consultations with organizations in the UN system with the aim to benefit from ERM information technology tools and systems with a view to improve on the effectiveness and efficiency of risk assessment at UNITAR. The Executive Director recognized the importance of the risk register and the assurances that it provides in making decisions, and that in most instances, the risks are anticipatory in nature. **The Board took note of the 2021 Risk Report.**

17. Under items 7a and 7b: Report of the UNEG Peer Review of the UNITAR Evaluation Function, and Proposed revision to the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework, the Chair recalled periodic updates by Management on matters related to evaluation and mentioned that over the course of 2021, there have been some noteworthy developments, including the establishment of the Evaluation Advisory Board, the UNEG Peer Review on the UNITAR evaluation function and consultations giving rise to proposed revisions to the evaluation and managing for results policies. The Executive Director emphasized the importance of the evaluation function and invited Dr. Patti Phillips, who is also a member of the Evaluation Advisory Board to elaborate on UNITAR's efforts to strengthen evaluation practices. Dr. Phillips commended UNITAR for undergoing a UNEG peer review on its evaluation function, with the objective to identify opportunities to strengthen the function for accountability, learning and quality improvement purposes. Dr. Phillips reported that the three-month exercise produced encouraging findings, with a well-functioning and well-governed practice, and that while the evaluation was appreciated and reports were credible and used in the organization, she mentioned that evaluation resources were stretched and that although much was being done with little, more could be done to promote use. Dr. Phillips made reference to the review under the annex and the recommendations on promoting evaluation and making it part of UNITAR's DNA, and to focus more on impact including building in impact measures up front, for example. The Director for Strategic Planning and Performance made reference to the draft Evaluation Policy annexed to the Board's documentation and noted that one of the review's recommendations was to separate the current Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework into two distinct policies, one on evaluation and one on managing for results, with various revisions having been introduced, such as revised requirements for independent and self-evaluations, provisions for evaluation of hosted partnerships and greater attention being given to gender and human rights. He noted that the proposed revised policy went through a series of consultations with Management and that the revised policy will further strengthen evaluation practice and continue to serve accountability, learning and programme improvement purposes. On the Managing for Results Policy, he noted that the proposed policy intended to address limitations from the previous requirements and to respond to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors. On impact, he noted the importance of building better from the beginning, to front-load the logic of evaluation and plans to identify monitoring and evaluation focal points at the programme unit level.
18. The Executive Director invited the Board to provide perspectives on how UNITAR can further strengthen the culture of evaluation, noting the tendency to move too often from activity to activity without stepping back to assess performance and learn. The importance and usefulness of the peer review was acknowledged, and UNITAR was congratulated for moving forward in implementing the peer review's recommendations and working to promote the evaluation culture. It was found that dividing the framework into two distinct policies made sense, and that a systematic results-based management approach as was being proposed with the Managing for Results Policy would be important step for attracting more sustainable funding, as it gives donors confidence in allocating funds. It was suggested that UNITAR work to explore allocating additional human resources for the implementation of the policies and to boost the Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. In considering the importance of the evaluation function, Dr. Phillips suggested that one way to look at the challenge of identifying impacts upfront would be to consider the question of what would happen if UNITAR did not providing training (or other capacity development work), and that impact would be defined by that. One example from the field of multilateral diplomacy and the impact of a much more dysfunctional system in the absence of training was provided. On monitoring organizational performance, it was suggested that a good measurement framework linked to the UNITAR strategic framework and mission would help provide a basis to measure the impact of the organization, and that communicating this framework would align well with donors and governments from the countries of UNITAR beneficiaries. **The Board took note of the**

observations made, welcomed the report of the UNEG Peer Review of the UNITAR Evaluation Function and the progress achieved, took note of Management's efforts to further promote the culture of evaluation and address the other recommendations contained in the peer review, and approved the Evaluation Policy and the Managing for Results Policy, as proposed.

19. Under item 8a, 2020 Results Report and key performance indicators, the Director for Strategic Planning and Performance referred to the Executive Directors opening remarks and overview of the Institute's performance. He highlighted the exponential growth of beneficiaries, now over 200,000 per year, which does not increase beneficiaries from awareness-raising through radio broadcasting. He also highlighted that for the first time, UNITAR switched the gender balance, with more outreach to females than males, suggesting that COVID-19 pandemic may have been a driving factor for this change. As was recognized by the Executive Director, he noted that while beneficiaries are growing in number, the reach to beneficiaries from countries in special situations is falling in relative terms. He also reviewed the key performance indicators and referred to the annexed documentation and emphasized the importance that UNITAR give to reaching out to the most vulnerable groups, and that this was very closely linked to the purpose of the Strategic Framework Fund. In response to a question on the increase in number of beneficiaries (and recognizing that this increase may be attributed to the conversion of in-person to online learning) and quality, the Executive Director acknowledged the difficulty in weighing the costs and benefits of online learning. While online learning provides opportunities to train more with less, and while online delivery offers greater democratization of learning, he questioned if online training could be considered of equal quality. It was suggested that a hybrid model of learning would likely continue in the post-COVID world, with e-Learning providing opportunities to reach greater numbers of beneficiaries and in more countries, yet in-person training being more appropriate in other circumstances. It was also mentioned that success depends on what measures are used. If the measure of success is knowledge acquisition, much of what can be accomplished through in-person can also be accomplished virtually. On the other hand, if the measure of success is application, then in-person training is often preferred. The key is to ensure that virtual learning is designed in such a way to facilitates application of knowledge and skills as well as changes in behavior. On increasing outreach to beneficiaries from countries in special situations, the Executive Directed acknowledged that language and access to the Internet were significant barriers. **The Board took note of the observations made and welcomed the 2020 Results Report and the update on the key performance indicators.**
20. Under item 8b, Report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council and 2021 ECOSOC resolution, the Chair recalled that the Secretary-General reports to the Economic and Social Council on the work of UNITAR every two years in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/11. He drew the Board's attention to the 2021 Report of the Secretary-General annexed to the documentation and which was circulated by Management in May 2021. The Executive Director presented the report at the Coordination and Management Meeting in June, and the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution E/Res/2021/16 (Annex 9 of the Board's documentation). The Executive Director recalled that the obligation to report to ECOSOC is longstanding and takes the form of a report of the Secretary-General, and usually followed by a resolution. He said that the content of the report reflects very much the same as what Management updates the Board. He indicated that the report was well received and that the resolution was positive. He highlighted some of the resolution's operational elements such as encouraging UNITAR to respond to the needs of developing countries and specific themes in which ECOSOC desired the Institute to continue working, including diplomacy, sustainable development, economic development, gender equality and empowerment of women, international law, human right, indigenous peoples, use of geospatial technology and satellite imagery to support evidence-based decision-making. He also noted that ECOSOC recognized UNOSAT by calling it the United Nations Satellite Centre as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General. In response to a question referencing some of the areas of work mentioned in the resolution and the Board's discussion of future areas of UNITAR programming, the Executive Director indicated that it would be important to cross reference the areas mentioned in the resolution and in particular human rights and judicial reform and police reform, and that he would speak with the United Nations Office of Human Rights. **The Board took note of the Report of the Secretary-General (E/2021/49) and ECOSOC resolution E/Res/2021/16 and welcomed the achievements on the implementation of the**

2018-2021 strategic framework and the support to Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

21. Under [item 9](#), Partnerships and Resource Mobilization and [item 10](#), Finance and budget, the Chair drew the Board's attention to the Report of the Fourteenth Session of the Finance Committee (UNITAR/BT/FC/62/14/4) and invited the Chair of the Finance Committee to introduce its report with the various sub-items presented in sequence.
22. Under [item 9a](#), Update on the European Union pillar assessment of UNITAR, the Chair of the Finance Committee recalled discussions at the Sixty-First Session and noted that the assessment exercise was delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of Management. Management had updated the Committee and noted that the two bottlenecks, namely, who pays for the assessment and the application of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) have been addressed. The Chair noted that the pillar assessment was scheduled to go forward in early 2022. The Executive Director added that UNITAR was caught up in a UN system bottleneck with issues on who pays for the assessment and compatibility of the GDPR given the UN's status under international law. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and the update on the European Union pillar assessment, and requested Management to report to the Board on the results of the assessment at its Sixty-Third Session.**
23. Under [item 9b](#), Proposed revisions to the policy guidelines for financial agreements, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that Management had revised the two policy guidelines that govern financial agreements, one for donor contributions and one for grants to implementing partners, with small adjustments. In the grants-in guidelines, a policy statement was introduced to enable Management to place un-spent balances from non-financial reporting projects into a programme unit's residual fund project account and use such funds for the purpose of furthering the strategic objectives of UNITAR. The Chair reported that language would be introduced in the relevant agreements. In conjunction with the policy guidelines governing grant agreements to implementing partners, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that Management had clarified some provisions, and in some other cases added additional controls e.g. to align the policy to the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy for grants to national or state security forces.
24. It was noted that the proposed revisions to the guidelines were a welcomed development as they help strengthen controls, compliance and oversight. Noting risks, it was urged that Management should further strengthen the guidelines as regards grants-out, for example, by looking into due diligence requirements for direct awards under \$100,000, and to allocate additional financial resources to the budget to strengthen due diligence and compliance of grants. The Director of the Division for Strategic Planning and Performance recalled the Board's discussions on the matter when the policy guidelines were last revised and in particular the discussions on the thresholds for due diligence and for competitive selection of implementing partners, with consensus at the time to keep the threshold at \$100,000. The Executive Director recognized the important point that was made and agreed that stronger controls would protect UNITAR against risk. He noted that it would nevertheless be important to find the right balance on such controls e.g. for grants below \$100,000 and that Management would look into this. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations, approved the revised Policy Guidelines for Agreements with Financial Implications (acceptance of voluntary contributions for specific purposes) and the revised Policy Guidelines for Grants to Implementing Partners, and requested Management to review due diligence requirements and report to the Board at its Sixty-Third Session.**
25. Under [item 9c](#), Proposed Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that the proposed Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy, which the Board requested Management to present at this year's session, was discussed at some length, recalled that the Finance Committee welcomed and congratulated Management for the growth that UNITAR has achieved over recent years and noted new strategy contains a set of four objectives and a set of strategic enablers. The Committee made a number of observations, as contained in its report and the Committee welcomed the strategy and that given its importance the Committee recommended that the Board continue discussion on the strategy at its session.
26. The Executive Director recalled discussions under [item 5c](#) in conjunction with the proposed extension of the strategy framework and in particular some suggestions made on resource

mobilization and partners, and invited other Trustees to make observations on the strategy. The Board made a number of additional comments. The objective of increasing pooled and flexible funding under the strategy was welcomed, as was the objective to increase the donor base of the Strategic Framework Fund and the importance of encouraging other donors to contribute to this facility. It was also noted that the growth targets for the budget would likely result from the integration of new partnerships and less from organic growth across the Institute's divisions, and that while acknowledging that partnerships contribute to producing outputs and increase in flexibility, Management and Board should prudently analyze the risks, costs and benefits related to future partnerships. Further, the importance of written consultation with donors on unspent balances regardless of the amount was noted, and that due diligence and sound risk management are key to mobilizing resources to contribute to the Institute's core mandate. The importance of UNITAR strengthening its corporate governance policies was also mentioned, with specific reference made to human rights due diligence/risk assessment. Recognizing the success of The Defeat-NCD Partnership and the objective of increasing resources potentially up to \$100 million, it was recommended that similar hosted partnerships could also be beneficial to increase resource base and beneficiary reach, provided that the partnerships serve the Institute's objectives and goals. On unspent balances from non-financial reporting projects, the importance of finding a formula that would mutually meet donor and UNITAR's needs was mentioned.

27. The Executive Director recalled the robust debates within UNITAR on the subject of growth, especially through partnerships, and questioned if growth is desirable within itself. While growth enables UNITAR to expand, he cautioned however that it is easy to lose sight on why UNITAR was created. Acknowledging the success of The Defeat-NCD Partnership and its capacity development and training components, he noted that UNITAR would not be interested in hosting partnerships solely for the sake of revenue growth and that it would be important to not lose sight of UNITAR's primary mandate. On unspent balances, the Executive Director underscored the important principle of consulting donors when confronted with a doubt and that any use of such balances needs to be done in concurrence with donors. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations, congratulated Management on the growth achieved under the 2017-2021 Resource Mobilization Strategy, welcomed the development of the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy covering the period from 2022 to 2027, and requested Management to finalize the strategy taking into consideration its observations, and to report to the Board at its Sixty-Third Session.**

28. Under item 10a, Financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2020 and Report of the Board of Auditors, the Chair of the Finance Committee drew the Board's attention to the financial statements and the report of the Board of Auditors. She noted that the 2020 external audit received an unqualified opinion and that the BOA issued a set of eight recommendations, all of which Management has accepted. Several recommendations were already implemented and others are under implementation. The Board of Auditors report also listed three recommendations from past cycles that are still under implementation, and that the Committee suggested that may be useful if Management can provide a timeline for their implementation and discuss any related challenges. The Executive Director noted that in comparison with other UN entities, UNITAR was among the top tier for implementing recommendations. The Chief for Finance and Budget reported that Management has implemented 82 per cent of recommendations. He reviewed the three outstanding audit recommendations, including the need to establish a roster for hiring consultants and that most of the work was completed although some technical issues still needed to be resolved and that it was expected to be fully implemented by the first quarter of 2022. On the second recommendation on developing criteria on full cost recovery, the Chief noted that while cost recovery has been discussed including possible new approaches for the past two years, including cost models and cost drivers, the COVID-19 pandemic (which has impacted work and the nature and volumes of cost recoveries) and the migration to a new ERP system as required Management to proposed that the new approach be reconsidered in 2023. On the third outstanding recommendation on documentation recorded in the project tracking tool, the Chief noted that the tool was a repository and not a control document, and that Management was in the process of evaluating the platform. The Director for Strategic Planning and Performance described the purpose of the tool to strengthen institutional memory and the challenges to ensure that the hundreds of agreements and thousands of related documents are recorded in a timely manner. Recognizing the far-reaching nature of the recommendation, he suggested that one way might be to consider limiting the types of documents that need to be recorded in the tool, such as final

financial and narrative reports, along with the respective agreements. **The Board took note of the audited financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2020 and the Report of the Board of Auditors.**

29. Under item 10b, Report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund, the Chair of the Finance Committee recalled that Management has been reporting to the Board on the application of the cost recovery policy since it was issued in 2013. The Chair of the Finance Committee referred to discussions on cost recovery at recent Board sessions, including on the challenges with some donors requiring increased transparency on the recovery of direct costs. She noted UNITAR's characteristics as a headquarter-based organization and the fact that many support service units perform both direct and indirect cost functions makes distinguishing between direct and indirect categories difficult in practice. She noted the exercise undertaken over the past two years to examine tasks and come up with a price list, and that the onset of COVID-19 and the change in the number and nature of tasks performed made, combined with the ongoing migration to a new ERP system, made it difficult to provide an overall assessment. She The Committee recommends that the Board take note of this update and request Management to keep the Board apprised of the situation in 2023 after the EU pillar assessment and new ERP has been fully migrated. It was noted that cost recovery should be applied in a harmonized and transparent way, and that any such proposals for a new cost recovery approach should be discussed extensively within the Board. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the update on the General Fund.**
30. Under item 10c, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that Management shared the proposed programme budget for 2022-2023 with the Advisory Committee for consultations. The Advisory Committee held a silent hearing and followed up with Management on a number of questions. She referred to the report of the Advisory Committee which was circulated to the Board and informed the Board that the Executive Director briefed the Committee on the Advisory Committee's observations and recommendations. It was noted that the Advisory Committee's recommendation on workforce matters, particularly the importance of ensuring equitable geographic representation in the UN and that further action was anticipated. **The Board took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.**
31. Under item 10d, Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2022-2023, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that the Committee discussed the proposed programme budget as proposed by Management. She emphasized that the UNITAR budget is a prospective budget, in so far as the funds to deliver programming are mobilized over the course of the biennium, and that the Finance Committee noted that the budget represented a projected 6 per cent increase from the approved revision of the 2020-2021 budget. The Chair of the Finance Committee drew the Board's attention to the wide variation in the budget of the various units, with some 40 per cent of the budget falling under peacekeeping. Given the projection-nature of the budget, the Committee noted the link to SDG alignment and resource mobilization, and took note of the Executive Director's comments that the discussion on additional strategic objectives or priorities would be discussed in conjunction with the proposed revision/extension of the strategic framework which was discussed yesterday. **The Board adopted the programme budget for the biennium 2022-2023, as proposed.**
32. Under item 10e, Update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that Management has been reporting to the Board on the revolving fund since its establishment in 2015 to help address bottlenecks and constraints when donor funds arrive late but are supported with a signed agreement. She indicated that the present report was merely an update of the situation since Management's last report in 2020. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund.**
33. Under item 10f, Strategic Framework Fund, the Chair of the Finance Committee recalled that the Board established the Fund in 2018 to support the implementation of the strategic framework and particularly the leave no one behind and reaching the furthest first principles of the 2030 Agenda. She also recalled that the Board, at its Sixty-First Session, took note of the request to work with Management to raise the visibility of the fund and promote it in its networks. She also noted that

the instrument was assessed in a recent evaluation as being relevant, effective and efficient, but its sustainability was in question with limited number of donors. The Committee recommended that the Board take note of Management's report on the Strategic Framework Fund. The importance of better promoting the fund as an effective and efficient channel was highlighted. It was noted that a flexible and pool instrument such as the fund was an efficient way in which Management could deal with the thousands of documents and reports required for the hundreds of donor specific project agreements. In response to a question on what actions Management took to respond to the recommendations from the independent evaluation, the Executive Director mentioned the importance of having larger initiatives that were multidivisional in nature, as opposed to small allocations, and that moving forward in 2022, the fund would support two large-scale projects. On mobilizing more contributions to the fund, the Executive Director referenced the recent meeting of the Friends of UNITAR at which he requested developing countries in the position to do so to also contribute to the fund and to provide cost sharing arrangements when possible. The Executive Director made reference to other funds of a pooled nature, including a SDG fund, and UNEP Environment Fund. He noted that challenges with UNITAR lacking a single thematic priority, such as the environment, children or violence against women, placed it somewhat at a disadvantage, and that UNITAR needed to build up the *cache* to appeal more to donors, possibly by creating thematic windows under the fund. The Executive Director acknowledged the indivisible nature of the SDGs and that the fund was initially designed with this principle in mind. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the Strategic Framework Fund, and the request to continue to work with Management to raise the visibility of the fund and help identify opportunities for support through its networks.**

34. Under item 10g, UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that the item is recurrent, and that Management has been providing the Board with annual updates. She indicated that returns are low with the annual yield of 0.34 per cent and are not likely to increase in the near future. She indicated that earnings from the investment are put in the ASHI Fund. **The Board took note of Management's update on the Investment Management and Returns Strategy.**
35. Under item 10h, Supplementary funding plan for the unfunded UNITAR ASHI liabilities, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that liabilities stood in 2020 at \$17.724 million and that Management expected that the supplementary funding would be covered in the next 15 years. **The Board took note of Management's update on the supplementary funding plan for the unfunded UNITAR ASHI liabilities.**
36. Under item 10i, Creation of a programme-level salary pool for meeting knowledge content development costs to cover pre- and post-project implementation validity periods, the Chair of the Finance Committee recalled that in 2019, Management proposed to undertake a pilot project and the Board agreed in order to address pre and post period of the validity of donor agreements. As reported by Management, the pilot was limited to one programme unit. Management reported that the experience was challenging and Management concluded that other possible mechanisms, such as pursuing pooled funding instruments on a programme basis similar to the Strategic Framework Fund might provide better opportunities to address the need to cover pre- and post-agreement validity project costs. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the creation of a programme-level salary pool for meeting content development costs to cover pre- and post-project implementation validity periods.**
37. Under item 10j, Migration to QUANTUM – the new Oracle cloud-based enterprise resource planning system, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that UNITAR is migrating to a new ERP system and the migration has been underway over the course of 2021 and will accelerate in 2022. Management has recently established an ERP committee. While the migration is expected to cost \$250,000, it is expected that the annual costs of some \$50,000 will lead to longer term savings than the current ERP. The Committee took note of Management's report on the migration to the new ERP. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and requested Management to update the Board on the migration to QUANTUM at its Sixty-Third Session.**
38. Under item 10k, Delegation of authority for financial administration and procurement, the Chair of the Finance Committee recalled correspondence from the Chair of the Board over the summer of 2021 on seeking delegation of authority for financial administration and procurement. She stated

that the Executive Director met recently with the UN Controller and confirmed that UNITAR wished to continue to have its financial statements certified by the Controller, in accordance with the UNITAR Statute. However, delegation of authority for procurement was desirable and that UNITAR Management was working with the Office of Legal Affairs on the wording of the delegation of authority in order to account for UNITAR's context as an autonomous institution outside of the UN Secretariat.

39. In response to one question seeking clarification on the matter, the Executive Director reminded the Board that UNITAR has had delegation of authority up to \$100,000 and that in excess to that threshold, procurement would need to be undertaken by UNDP. As UNDP recently raised its procurement fees, the Executive Director said that Management felt that it would make sense to undertake such procurement internally by requesting an increase in the delegation of authority, with UNITAR savings in the order of some \$300,000 to \$400,000 in fees that would be given to UNDP. On financial delegation, the Executive Director said that he would feel more comfortable if the Controller would continue to certify the financial statements. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and requested Management to report to the Board at its Sixty-Third Session.**
40. Under item 10I, Refund policy for fees collected for e-learning courses and Master and Executive Diploma programmes, the Chair of the Finance Committee reported that Management has proposed a refund policy to govern instances whereby an individual registering and paying enrolment fees for a course cancels enrolment and requests a refund. She noted that according to Management's report, at present UNITAR is refunding all fees paid, with approximately \$200 cost in transactions that need to be absorbed by UNITAR per cancellation. The Chair of the Finance Committee would all Management to retain a flat fee of \$150 to cover such transaction costs. It is understood that Management would ensure that these policy measures would be clearly communicated to individuals at the time of course enrolment and payment of fees. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and approved the refund policy for fees collected for e-learning courses and Master and Diploma programmes, as proposed.**
41. Under item 11, Dates for the Sixty-Third Session of the Board and adoption of the Sixty-Second Session's conclusions and recommendations, **the Board requested the Executive Director to continue consultations with Trustees on the date options discussed for the convening of its Sixty-Third Session (e.g. 27 to 28 October 2022, 3 to 4 November 2022 or 10 to 11 November 2022). The Board adopted the key decisions contained herein, and agreed to adopt the long report of its Sixty-Second Session as a follow-up to the present session.**
42. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its observations and encouragement. He acknowledged outgoing Trustees Dr. Yukie Osa and Minister Amaechi, whose second consecutive terms would be ending on 31 December 2021. He acknowledged that the second consecutive terms of some other Trustees would be ending during the course of 2022, and that Management would try to have the Sixty-Third Session organized at such a time to ensure optimum participation. The session was closed.

Annex I

KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Item 5: Follow-up from the Sixty-First Session

Item 5a: Update on UNITAR response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic

The Board took note of Management's update and the observations made on UNITAR's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Items 5b and 5c: Follow-up on recommendations of the Mid-term Evaluation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework, and Proposed extension and adjustments to the 2018-2021 strategic framework

The Board took note of Management's follow-up on the recommendations from the evaluation of the 2018-2021 strategic framework and agreed to extend the current framework to cover the period from 2022 to 2025, with the understanding that the Board's observations would be incorporated into the strategic framework document and circulated to the Board as a follow-up to the session.

Item 6: Risk assessment report

The Board took note of the 2021 Risk Report.

Item 7: Evaluation

Items 7a and 7b: Report of the UNEG Peer Review of the UNITAR Evaluation Function, and Proposed revision to the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework

The Board took note of the observations made, welcomed the report of the UNEG Peer Review of the UNITAR Evaluation Function and the progress achieved, took note of Management's efforts to further promote the culture of evaluation and address the other recommendations contained in the peer review, and approved the Evaluation Policy and the Managing for Results Policy, as proposed.

Item 8: Programming and reporting

Item 8a: 2020 Results Report and key performance indicators

The Board took note of the observations made and welcomed the 2020 Results Report and the update on the key performance indicators.

Item 8b: Report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council and 2021 ECOSOC resolution

The Board took note of the Report of the Secretary-General (E/2021/49) and ECOSOC resolution E/Res/2021/16 and welcomed the achievements on the implementation of the 2018-2021 strategic framework and the support to Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Item 9: Partnerships and Resource Mobilization

Item 9a: Update on the European Union pillar assessment of UNITAR

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and the update on the European Union pillar assessment, and requested Management to report to the Board on the results of the assessment at its Sixty-Third Session.

Item 9b: Proposed revisions to the policy guidelines for financial agreements

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations, approved the revised Policy Guidelines for Agreements with Financial Implications (acceptance of voluntary contributions for specific purposes) and the revised Policy Guidelines for Grants to Implementing Partners, and requested Management to review due diligence requirements and report to the Board at its Sixty-Third Session.

Item 9c: Proposed Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations, congratulated Management on the growth achieved under the 2017-2021 Resource Mobilization Strategy, welcomed the development of the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy covering the period from 2022 to 2027, and requested Management to finalize the strategy taking into consideration the observations made, and to report to the Board at its Sixty-Third Session.

Item 10: Finance and budget**Item 10a: Financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2020 and Report of the Board of Auditors**

The Board took note of the audited financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2020 and the Report of the Board of Auditors.

Item 10b: Report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the update on the General Fund.

Item 10c: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

The Board took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Item 10d: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2022-2023

The Board adopted the programme budget for the biennium 2022-2023, as proposed.

Item 10e: Update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund.

Item 10f: Strategic Framework Fund

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the Strategic Framework Fund, and the request to continue to work with Management to raise the visibility of the fund and help identify opportunities for support through its networks.

Item 10g: UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy

The Board took note of Management's update on the Investment Management and Returns Strategy.

Item 10h: Supplementary funding plan for the unfunded UNITAR ASHI liabilities

The Board took note of Management's update on the supplementary funding plan for the unfunded UNITAR ASHI liabilities.

Item 10i: Creation of a programme-level salary pool for meeting knowledge content development costs to cover pre- and post-project implementation validity periods

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the creation of a programme-level salary pool for meeting content development costs to cover pre- and post-project implementation validity periods.

Item 10j: Migration to QUANTUM – the new Oracle cloud-based enterprise resource planning system

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and requested Management to update the Board on the migration to QUANTUM at its Sixty-Third Session.

Item 10k: Delegation of authority for financial administration and procurement

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and requested Management to report to the Board at its Sixty-Third Session.

Item 10I: Refund policy for fees collected for e-learning courses and Master and Executive Diploma programmes

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and approved the refund policy for fees collected for e-learning courses and Master and Diploma programmes, as proposed.

Item 11: Dates for the Sixty-Third Session of the Board and adoption of the Sixty-Second Session's conclusions and recommendations

The Board requested the Executive Director to continue consultations with Trustees on the date options discussed for the convening of its Sixty-Third Session (e.g. 27 to 28 October 2022, 3 to 4 November 2022 or 10 to 11 November 2022). The Board adopted the key decisions contained herein, and agreed to adopt the long report of its Sixty-Second Session as a follow-up to the present session.