

Board of Trustees

Sixy-First Session

5-6 November 2020

UNITAR/BT/61/7

28 January 2021

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

1. The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) convened virtually via Webex on 5 and 6 November 2020 for its Sixty-First 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. Chibuike Amaechi

Ms. Diana Chávez (Vice Chair)

His Excellency Mr. Chen Xu

Dr. Sarah Cook

His Excellency Mr. Luis Gallegos (Chair)

His Excellency Mr. Gennady Gatilov

Her Excellency Ms. Terhi Hakala

Her Excellency Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan

Dr. Deisi Kusztra

His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber
Represented by Mr. Samir Yeddes in his absence

His Excellency Mr. Vijay Kunhianandan Nambiar

Dr. Yukie Osa

Dr. Patti Phillips

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:

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 Bhola, 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

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

Mr. Jonas Haertle, Special Assistant, 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

Mr. Joel Thalla, Chief, Finance and Budget Unit

3. Under item 1, Opening of the session, the Chair welcomed the Trustees and extended a particularly warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg and His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber who were appointed by the Secretary-General in 2020. The Chair announced that the Board had constituted quorum with 14 of 15 members present. 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 and then reviewed the agenda items to be discussed and provided an overview of activities across UNITAR's diverse programmatic divisions and The Defeat-NCD Partnership since the past session. He spoke of the increased use of digital and online tools; the growth in beneficiaries particularly from peace, people and planet-related programming; the incorporation of the Sustainable Cycles

Programme; new health-related programming, with some initiatives responding directly to the COVID-19 pandemic; and new partnerships to leverage the Institute's delivery capacity through mobile learning. Reflecting on UNITAR's budget in both revenue and expenditure terms, he noted that the proposed revision to the 2020-2021 programme budget still represented an increase of 23 per cent over the 2018-2019 budget. He mentioned that successfully mitigating the challenges of the pandemic has introduced the need for adjustments to operating modalities in some programming areas, such as The Defeat-NCD Partnership, to work more closely with national experts and UN Volunteers and to mainstream technology and expand online delivery and thematic areas of programming further in order to adjust to the new realities. He also spoke of the need for further mobilization of support to the Strategic Framework Fund; for crafting stronger partnerships particularly in the health architecture taking into consideration the number of health-related organizations that Geneva has to offer; for communicating effectively and ensuring that UNITAR is 'on the radar' of its beneficiaries, donors and partners; for evaluating programming that is delivered online; and for continued engagement of the Board of Trustees in providing guidance on operational content, online technologies and the types of partnerships that UNITAR needs to develop for the future. **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 and suggested that discussion on item 6c, "Update on the Sustainable Cycles Programme and Bonn Office" be shifted so as to be discussed on Friday, 6 November, and that elections to the Finance Committee be added under item 10, Finance and budget. **The Board adopted the agenda as proposed by the Chair.**
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 two new Trustees, His Excellency Mr. Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg and His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber to the Board. **The Board welcomed the new Trustees.**
8. Under item 5, Delivering training in times of COVID-19: Learning needs and UNITAR responses, the Chair referred to his letter of April 2020 in which he outlined how UNITAR is committed to pursuing its mission in the fields of training, knowledge sharing and awareness raising under its thematic pillars, in addition to intensifying work in the area of health. The Executive Director described the Institute's three-pronged strategy in response to COVID-19, including staff safety, moving face-to-face activities to online delivery, and developing COVID-specific response initiatives. He made specific reference to two initiatives: 1) a recent training event organized by The Defeat-NCD Partnership in cooperation with the Rwandan Biomedical Centre which aimed to improve critical care and prevent mortality particularly among patients with pre-existing non communicable diseases; and 2) the publication of an information package on COVID-19 Preparedness and Responses in Places of Detention, in cooperation with the Justice and Corrections Service of the Office of Rule of Law and Security of the United Nations Department of Peace Operation and the Swedish Prison and Probation Services. The Executive Director enquired what additional work UNITAR could do given its niche in training and capacity building, suggesting the need for stronger partnership with the health infrastructure in Geneva and elsewhere.
9. The Board commended Management for reacting quickly, showing flexibility and resilience, successfully transferring the delivery of activities from a face-to-face to an online modality and re-profiling and developing activities in other areas. The joint training course with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the outreach that The Defeat-NCD Partnership has been able to make particularly as it relates to COVID-19 were praised. The Board made a number of suggestions, including further broadening online training opportunities, delivering more programmes in the official languages of the United Nations, offering training to Member States on how to negotiate online, factoring in the digital divide that may prevent some countries,

particularly those in developing countries, from accessing online training opportunities, and adopting a market-based approach to respond to demand. With regard to further developing health-related capacity building, it was suggested to consider scaling up The Defeat-NCD Partnership to respond to COVID-19, noting that crafting partnerships with organizations based in Geneva such as the GAVI Vaccine Alliance as well other health institutions at the forefront of vaccines may provide opportunities for training and related programming that targets the more vulnerable and distressed States.

10. In response to the need to pursue a market-oriented approach, the Executive Director spoke of the predicament with the online market being highly saturated, including with free courses, and the need to develop customized and quality services by recovering costs. In reference to the digital divide, he noted that some micro apps including the UNITAR safe surgery app can be used in Internet unstable areas once downloaded on smart phones. On partnerships, he noted the Institute's engagement with the World Health Organization (WHO) in the fields of data and geographical information systems and applications in the area of health and that WHO is part of The Defeat-NCD Partnership's Governance Mechanism. He noted that UNITAR had sought to engage with GAVI but that its emphasis has been on the distribution aspects of the vaccines as opposed to training. At the national level, he noted the existing engagement with health ministries, such as those in Rwanda and Myanmar. On broadening training delivery in other languages, the Executive Director spoke of the need not only to deliver in other UN languages, but eventually other national languages and local dialects. Finally, he emphasised the importance of ensuring that training is customized and based on the needs of the beneficiaries. **The Board took note of UNITAR's response to the COVID-19 crisis.**

11. Under item 6a, Policy on Conditions and Risk Assessment Criteria for Hosted Partnerships, the Chair drew the Board's attention to the draft policy under Annex I, which Management prepared as a follow-up to the Board's request for assessing risks of future partnerships. The Chair also noted that the draft policy was intended to address both the Board of Trustees' request and the Board of Auditors' recommendation in its 2019 external audit. The Executive Director informed the Board that the draft policy was prepared based on Management's reflection of The Defeat-NCD Partnership and a review of conditions and criteria for hosted partnerships in other organizations. In response to a suggestion that the role of the Board in the decision-making process of hosted partnerships be made explicit in the policy, the Executive Director acknowledge the Board as the apex decision-making authority of the Institute and explained the decision on incorporating the hosted partnership would be put before the Board or earlier through circulation. **The Board approved the Policy on Conditions and Risk Assessment for Hosted Partnerships and Related Hosted Arrangements, as proposed, with the inclusion of a provision that Management would submit any proposed partnership to be hosted by UNITAR either at the time of the Board's sessions or by circulation together with the due diligence risk assessment for a decision to be made by the Board. The Board took note that Management would include risk assessment as a standing item on the agenda of the Board's sessions.**

12. Under item 6b, The Defeat-NCD Partnership, the Chair recalled that the Board endorsed the Agreement between UNITAR and The Defeat-NCD Partnership to host the Secretariat of the Partnership and asked for an update on The Partnership at its Sixty-First Session. The Executive Director indicated that the Partnership was integrated into UNITAR as it was seen as a good fit with UNITAR's capacity building activities and the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He informed the Board of some problems encountered on both the revenue and expenditure side of The Partnership, and recalled that the projected 60 per cent growth in the initial UNITAR 2020-2021 programme budget was largely the result of The Partnership's integration. On the revenue side, the continuing dialogue and dynamics between the United Nations and the European Commission (EC) have prevented UNITAR from being re-assessed with the European Union (EU) pillar assessment requirement and consequently from being eligible to access funding opportunities under the EU's indirect funding modality. On the expenditure side, the COVID-19 related travel restrictions have prevented The Partnership from delivering activities as planned and has required devising a new operating

model for delivery based on the recruitment of national consultants and UN Volunteers where possible. As a consequence of these two factors, The Partnership has not grown as planned.

13. The Director of The Defeat-NCD Partnership thanked Trustees who attended the recent World Health Assembly High Level Panel Discussion, which was widely attended by health ministers, WHO and academia, as well as country representatives from Ecuador, Gambia and Bhutan who have requested The Partnership's services from 2021. In response to a request for additional information on the new operating modalities, the Director noted that the model changed primarily due to the inability to access EU indirect management funding, which not only included the initial 2018 EU pledge of 3 million Euros, but also anticipated country level EU funding in 20 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. In response, The Partnership front-loaded its own resources and engaged UN Volunteers where possible to execute programmes. He noted the costed action plans for Myanmar and Rwanda at \$101 million which have been developed, with important domestic financing and small catalytic funding from international donors. The new operating model is accompanying the beneficiary country in resource mobilization efforts through a pooled mechanism to combat NCDs. **The Board took note of the observations made and Management's update on The Defeat-NCD Partnership.**

14. Under item 6c, Sustainable Cycles Programme and Bonn Office, the Chair recalled that at its Sixtieth Session, the Board welcomed steps that Management had taken to integrate the Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) Programme into UNITAR and to open an office in Bonn, Germany. The Board also discussed matters on the status of the UNU SCYCLE personnel in Bonn that would be transferred to UNITAR and believed that a change in the UNITAR Statute would not be appropriate and encouraged the Executive Director to work with German authorities to find a mutually acceptable solution. The Executive Director referred to the opening of the Bonn Office in October 2020 and expressed his appreciation to the German Foreign Office, the Permanent Representative of Germany and the German Ambassador in Bonn, the Mayor of Bonn, the Representative of the European Commission and the Head of UNITAR Bonn Office. He described the Bonn Office's work focusing largely on SCYCLE programming, with the e-Waste Monitor being its flagship deliverable. He expressed hope that SCYCLE's work would evolve into training and building capacity at the country level for e-waste management, noting the importance of this for many countries who are struggling with e-waste, and that SCYCLE would also enhance its cooperation with the other pillars of UNITAR's work. The Executive Director noted that the work in Bonn was in addition to the work being performed in Geneva and the other UNITAR outposted presences. He referred to the item's annotation and the reference to the e-Waste Coalition and confirmed that the intention was for SCYCLE to contribute to the work of the Secretariat which is expected to be based in Geneva. He noted that the transition of SCYCLE from the United Nations University to UNITAR takes time and that the full transition would be completed by the end of 2021 and that the matters related to the status of SCYCLE personnel discussed at the Board's Sixtieth Session is ongoing and would be addressed before the end of this transition period. The Head of the Bonn Office presented the objectives of SCYCLE to introduce more in-house expertise in the research domain in the e-waste sector and expand to the field of circular economy and facilitate training with governments and companies. He indicated that with 24 other organizations located in Bonn working on issues related to sustainability, there would be opportunities to develop cooperation perhaps as service providers to such organizations as well as other players in the German region and outreach to the European Commission.

15. A number of comments were made, including the prospectus of further strengthening SCYCLE with the transition to UNITAR, that work would not be moved from Geneva to Bonn but that Bonn would open new opportunities and expand UNITAR's reach, and that lingering administrative arrangements would be addressed during the transitional period. With Germany being the third largest country to receive asylum seekers, the symbolic meaning of opening an office in Bonn during these times was observed. **The Board took note of Management's update and welcomed the opening of the Bonn Office.**

16. Under item 6d, Exploring and Assessing New Income Streams and Future Growth, the Chair recalled that at its Sixtieth Session, the Board took note of plans to develop new income streams and future growth, particularly in the area of e-Learning, and requested Management to report follow-up work on the matter at the Sixty-First Session. The Executive Director reviewed the exercise undertaken by Simon Kucher & Partners in 2019 and indicated that Management had moved forward with implementing some of the recommendations, such as considering the potential of offering printed certificates for a fee for some free online courses and hosting other partnership arrangements, as well as developing an online donation system for its e-Learning platforms. He reported that partnerships considered in 2020 were not being pursued at present and that the donation system was under development and would be implemented in 2021. **The Board took note of Management's update on exploring and assessing new income streams and future growth.**
17. Under item 6e, Horizontal Learning Services, the Chair recalled that at its Sixtieth Session, the Board took note of the revised concept paper on Horizontal Learning Services and requested the Executive Director work on a short-term contract option to address the objectives of the subject matter and to report to the Board at the Sixty-First Session. The Executive Director noted that the concept's objective was to ensure that the same quality of instructional design would be applied across the Institute for greater harmonization of training services. He noted that an online certification course was under development and that it would be ready for delivery in 2021 to staff of UNITAR and the Global Network of the International Training Centres for Authorities and Leaders. It was noted that the concept should adapt to the needs of targeted groups, facilitate operations of programmes and achieve positive input to output results. **The Board took note of Management's update on the development of the foundation course on learning development for UNITAR staff and personnel.**
18. Under item 7, Report of the Mid-term Evaluation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework, the Chair recalled that at its Sixtieth Session, the Board took note of the implementation of the strategic framework, welcomed the progress made and encouraged Management to establish a Reference Group in conjunction with the scheduled mid-term evaluation and to report to the Board at its Sixty-First Session. The Reference Group was comprised of Ambassador Nazhat Khan, Dr. Sarah Cook and Dr. Patti Phillips. The Executive Director noted that the evaluation was an elaborate undertaking that was led by an independent consultant and that benefitted from the guidance of the Reference Group. The evaluation covered the first two years of the implementation of the strategic framework and assessed progress against relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability criteria. On behalf of the Reference Group, Dr. Sara Cook presented the evaluation's main findings across the six criteria, as well as the evaluation's set of recommendations and lessons learned. Dr. Cook mentioned, among other findings, the strong relevance of the framework with its alignment to the 2030 Agenda and the ability of UNITAR to respond flexibly and proactively to beneficiary needs; the framework's strong coherence particularly at the global level and the perception of the Institute as being a trusted partner, while acknowledging UNITAR's lack of operational capacity at the country level; the perception that programmes are well designed and are implemented effectively and managed professionally; that although UNITAR is characterized mostly by small scale projects, strong results from such projects have come about particularly for the projects that involve institutionalization through training of trainers approaches, for example; the challenges of investing much effort in resource mobilization, the opportunities for more programming between divisions, and the potential benefits of the Strategic Framework Fund and challenges of the cost-recovery model; that while being expensive relative to other actors in the training and capacity development landscape, the perception that UNITAR represents good value for money; the difficulty for UNITAR to monitor the deeper, longer-term changes and the need to better document and showcase impacts or the longer-term changes that UNITAR programming is making. Dr. Cook then summarized the set of five areas of recommendations, including 1) the need for UNITAR to continue to be responsive to the needs and priorities of intended users, donors and strategic partners; 2) the need to maintain the framework's clear alignment with the present development agenda into the next four-year cycle; 3) that core capacities of UNITAR are the right ones to deliver on the long-term results; 4) to deliver more and wider results through targeted fundraising; 5) and the need to deepen

understanding and expand on UNITAR's contribution to impact. Dr. Cook emphasized the quality of the evaluation and UNITAR's results, the need to pay attention to the crosscutting issues in programme design (e.g. gender and empowerment of women, inclusion of indigenous groups, disability) and the need to delve into the substantive changes that are brought about from UNITAR programming. The other members of the Reference Group congratulated Management on the exercise and stressed the importance to assess performance and consider opportunities for improvement, the need to better promote the work that UNITAR is doing and to better demonstrate the impact of UNITAR's work beyond the delivery of training.

19. It was mentioned that the evaluation was very competent with analysis and that the recommendations were both pertinent and practical. A concern was raised that closer partnership with the UN country teams and the Common Country Analysis/UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework could present challenges in programme implementation, however. The Executive Director applauded the approach taken in the evaluation and the widespread outreach to beneficiaries, donors, implementing partners and staff, and indicated that the evaluation recommendations needed to be followed-up with a set of operational guidelines. In observing UNITAR's project-based business model and the fact that the design of projects is shaped in consultation with donors, he indicated the constraints that UNITAR would face in introducing all relevant recommendations in all components of the Institute's work. On coherence and cooperation, the Executive Director stressed the importance of becoming more effective in working with decentralized funding structures (within the UN system and beyond) and knowing who to reach out to at the country level and see if training components of country programmes would fit the UNITAR mandate. On the issue of visibility, he noted the importance for UNITAR to convince donors to help implement their respective development cooperation objectives. **The Board took note of the observations made and welcomed 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.**
20. Under item 8, Programme Performance Report for the Biennium 2018-2019, 2019 Results Report and key performance indicators, the Chair noted Management's regular reporting on corporate results. The Director for Strategic Planning and Performance drew the Board's attention to the reports annexed to the Board's documentation and explained that the Programme Performance Report measures the extent to which the results presented in the programme budget were achieved using a traffic light rating scale. He reported that beneficiary outreach in 2018-2019 greatly exceeded outreach in 2016-2017, and that close to three quarters of outcome indicators were achieved or surpassed and two thirds of output indicators, representing an improvement over the 2016-2017 programme performance. He informed that Board that some 37 per cent of outcome areas supported the no one left behind principle of the 2030 Agenda and that six areas specifically supported gender equality and empowerment of women objectives. He also presented the 2019 Results Report and referenced the large increase in beneficiary outreach over the previous years and that most training activities continued to be implemented in field locations. On the key performance indicators, he noted the importance of the dashboard and the need for continued progress, and that outreach to learners from countries in special situations had declined from previous years in relative terms. He referenced the observation made by the Executive Director in conjunction with the previous item on the difficulty of meeting all indicator targets given the project-based nature of UNITAR. **The Board took note of the observations and welcomed the 2018-2019 Programme Performance Report, the 2019 Results Report and the update on the key performance indicators.**
21. The Chair announced that the Finance Committee convened on Friday, 30 October 2020 for its Thirteenth Session and that the report of the session (UNITAR/BT/61/FC/13/2) was circulated to the Board. The Chair invited the Finance Committee Chair to present the report.

22. Under item 9, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, the Chair of the Finance Committee referred to the Board's discussion at its Sixtieth Session on whether Management should establish an advisory group on partnerships and resource mobilization, but felt that informal arrangements should be made with expertise from within and outside UNITAR on strategic partnership engagement. He reported that UNITAR had progressed much from a donation-based organization to one also based on one with engagement with strategic partners beyond donors, including alliances such as UN CC:Learn and the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy. He also reported that a framework for engaging with implementing partners had been developed and that other ways of diversifying funding such as fee-based courses and softy earmarked funding had been pursued. He noted that the present Resource Mobilization Strategy is scheduled to end in 2021 and that Management planned to develop a new strategy on partnerships and resource mobilization.
23. It was noted that meeting growth targets in the strategy would likely result from the integration of The Defeat-NCD Partnership and less from organic growth across the Institute's divisions. While acknowledging that partners contribute to producing outputs and raising visibility, Management and the Board should prudently analyse risks, costs and benefit of such partnerships, and welcomed the Board's decision under item 6a that risk assessment would become a standing item on the Board's agenda. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and requested Management to submit a Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy covering the period of 2022-2025 for the Board's consideration at its Sixty-Second Session.**
24. Under item 10a, Audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors, the Finance Committee Chair noted that Management had accepted all of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and that the recommendations were either already implemented or expected to be implemented by the end of 2020. The Finance Committee Chair summarized the overall findings of the Board of Auditors, that there is no significant error, omission or misstatement, that the financial statements were presented fairly and that recommendations did not have any implementation costs except the costs for developing e-recruitment. He further said that the Executive Director noted that some of the recommendations may be overtaken by the adoption of the new Oracle Cloud enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. **The Board took note of the Report of the Finance Committee and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 and the Report of the Board of Auditors.**
25. Under item 10b, Report on the application of the cost recovery approach and the situation of the General Fund, the Finance Committee Chair referred to regular discussions since the policy was developed in 2013 and that the recovery rate has overtime improved and that there is at present discussion in the United Nations on what the minimum and maximum levels of operational reserve should be. He noted that the timing was not right to modify the existing cost recovery model, however, and that it would be presented for the Board's consideration by 2022. The Executive Director recalled the fact that the present formula covers two rates: programme support costs at 7 per cent and direct support costs at 11 per cent. He also recalled discussions at the Board's Sixtieth Session, in which he outlined two challenges that Management was facing with the existing formula: 1) insufficient operational reserves were being generated from the cost recovery formula; and 2) some donors, such as the European Commission (EC), required actual costs to be charged as opposed to rates for recovering costs for the support functions. Since the Sixtieth Session, however, the Executive Director indicated that the needs for introducing a revised cost recovery formula have become less urgent primarily for three reasons: 1) Management has been able to improve the average cost recovery rate to 16.5 per cent or 17 per cent and that he expected operational reserves would increase to eight months by 2021; 2) expected funding from the EC would likely be further delayed due to the pending pillar assessment exercise; and 3) the migration from the Atlas to the Oracle ERP system in January 2022 would certainly introduce changes to calculating costs in the system.

26. The importance of cost recovery was noted and that it should be applied in a transparent and harmonized way. **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. The Board requested Management to keep the Board apprised of the cost recovery situation and to propose a possible new formula at the Sixty-Third Session of the Board. The Board requested Management to report on the migration of the Oracle Cloud ERP at the Sixty-Second Session of the Board.**
27. The Finance Committee Chair reported item 10c, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in tandem with item 10d, Proposed revision to the programme budget for the biennium 2020-2021. The Finance Committee Chair drew the Board’s attention to the report and the Advisory Committee’s consideration of the proposed revision to the programme budget for 2020-2021 and its observations and recommendations and noted that the report was rather anodyne. While noting that the Advisory Committee found the forecast for expenditure for the remainder of 2020 to be overly optimistic, the Finance Committee Chair reported that the Executive Director was adopting a prudent approach and that the UN would establish a minimum and maximum levels of operational reserves. On the proposed revision to the programme budget under item 10d, the Finance Committee Chair indicated that the \$20.18 million reduction was occasioned not so much by COVID-19 but by the decrease in funding opportunities for The Defeat-NCD Partnership due to risks related to the delay with the EU pillar assessment and the need to implement a new operating model. He stated that UNITAR was able to offset much of the budget reduction of The Partnership by a budget increase in other divisions, notably the Peace and Satellite Applications and Research divisions. **The Board took note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Board adopted the revision to the programme budget for the biennium 2020-2021 as proposed and took note of the update on risks to The Defeat-NCD Partnership.**
28. Under item 10e, Update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund, the Finance Committee Chair referred to the Board’s criteria for use of the fund and that Management had subsequently tightened the criteria. In reference to the write-off of one loan, he mentioned that the Chief for Finance and Budget had confirmed during the committee that the write-off was permanent and that the fund would be short of that amount. He recalled stating during the committee that it was important to carefully calibrate the use of the fund and to use it in cases where advanced access to funding is required, and that he did not find that additional criterial were needed and that there were not issues with the rules but rather with the application of the rules. **The Board took note of the update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund and Management’s commitment to strictly adhering to the established conditions, criteria and procedures of the revolving fund.**
29. Under item 10f, Update on the Strategic Framework Fund, the Finance Committee Chair reported that the Executive Director had provided details of the two major donors, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the State of Qatar. He noted that the Executive Director would approach Qatar on renewing its contribution for 2021, that the Sida contribution was ongoing and that he had approached several other donors. The Finance Committee Chair recalled the Fund’s flexibility as it provides the UNITAR with softly earmarked funds and promotes synergy. He reported that the Executive Director would continue to reach out to the diplomatic community to strengthen the mechanism as a more reliable base to support UNITAR programming. **The Board took note of the Finance Committee’s observations and Management’s update on the Strategic Framework Fund, and the request to work with UNITAR to raise the visibility of the Fund and to promote the instrument within its networks.**
30. The Finance Committee Chair reported item 10g, UNITAR Investment Management and Returns Strategy, and item 10h, Supplementary funding plan for the unfunded UNITAR ASHI liabilities, in tandem. The Finance Committee Chair referred to the Committee’s discussion at the Sixtieth Session and recommended that the Board take note of the strategy as the investments are managed by the United Nations Development Programme. **The Board took**

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

31. Under item 10j, Creation of a programme-level salary pool for meeting knowledge content development costs to cover pre- and post-project implementation/validity periods, the Finance Committee Chair referred again to the Board's discussion at the Sixtieth Session and reported that Management would need to continue the pilot project for more time and noted that Management would be fully transparent on the use of mechanism. **The Board took note of Management's update and requested Management to continue the experimental proposal for one full budget and audit cycle, involve all stakeholders such as donors and the UN Board of Auditors, and present a full-scale update and recommendation to the Board at its Sixty-Second Session.**
32. Under item 10j, Elections to the Finance Committee, the Finance Committee Chair announced that his term on the Board would be expiring in December 2020 and that he would not be eligible to serve a third term. **The Board requested the Executive Director to continue consultations with Trustees on elections to the Finance Committee.**
33. The Finance Committee Chair announced that the Office of Internal Oversight Services had contacted Management on the scheduling of an internal audit on mainstreaming SDGs and that it should be discussed by the Board. He noted that it was suggested that the audit should perhaps be undertaken in 2022.
34. The Finance Committee Chair expressed his satisfaction as a member of the Board and commended the Executive Director for aligning the Institute's work to the Sustainable Development Goals and engaging with the private sector. He noted how this alignment is having a positive impact on the image, visibility and credibility of UNITAR. The Chair thanked the Finance Committee Chair for his outstanding contribution to the Board and UNITAR and joined his praise of the Executive Director.
35. Dr. Cook reflected on her tenure on the Board over the past six years and commended the Executive Director for his leadership in steering the Institute and expanding the scope, scale and quality of programming; acknowledged the support from beneficiaries, as witnessed by The Defeat-NCD Partnership's recent event; and praised the professionalism of UNITAR staff. The Executive Director also thanked outgoing Trustees Ambassador Vijay Nambiar, Ambassador Per Örnéus and Dr. Sara Cook for their support of UNITAR and service on the Board.
36. Under item 11, Dates for the Sixty-Second Session of the Board and adoption of the Sixty-First Session's conclusions and recommendations, **the Board requested the Executive Director to consult Trustees as a follow-up to the session on the proposed dates of 11 to 12 November 2021 or 18 to 19 November 2021 for the Sixty-Second Session of the Board. The Board agreed to adopt the key decisions and the report on the conclusions and recommendations of its Sixty-First Session as a follow-up to the session.**
37. The Chair renewed his praise for the outgoing Trustees and thanked the Executive Director for his able leadership and the Secretariat and UNITAR staff for effectively serving the session. The Executive Director thanked Trustees for engaging in this virtual session and expressed his hope that the health situation would permit Trustees to convene in person next year. The session was adjourned.

Annex I

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

Item 5: Delivering training in times of COVID-19: Learning needs and UNITAR responses

The Board took note of UNITAR's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Item 6: Follow-up from the Sixtieth Session

Item 6a: Policy on Conditions and Risk Assessment Criteria for Hosted Partnerships

The Board approved the Policy on Conditions and Risk Assessment for Hosted Partnerships and Related Hosted Arrangements, as proposed, with the inclusion of a provision that Management would submit any proposed partnership to be hosted by UNITAR either at the time of the Board's sessions or by circulation together with the due diligence risk assessment for a decision to be made by the Board. The Board took note that Management would include risk assessment as a standing item on the agenda of the Board's sessions.

Item 6b: The Defeat-NCD Partnership

The Board took note of the observations made and Management's update on The Defeat-NCD Partnership.

Item 6c: Sustainable Cycles Programme and the Bonn Office

The Board took note of Management's update and welcomed the opening of the Bonn Office.

Item 6d: Exploring and assessing new income streams and future growth

The Board took note of Management's update on exploring and assessing new income streams and future growth.

Item 6e: Horizontal Learning Services

The Board took note of Management's update on the development of the foundation course on learning development for UNITAR staff and personnel.

Item 7: Report of the Mid-term Evaluation of the 2018-2021 Strategic Framework

The Board took note of the observations made and welcomed 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.

Item 8: Programming and reporting

Item 8a: Programme Performance Report for the Biennium 2018-2019, 2019 Results Report and key performance indicators

The Board took note of its observations and welcomed the 2018-2019 Programme Performance Report, the 2019 Results Report and the update on the key performance indicators.

Item 9: Partnerships and Resource Mobilization

The Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and requested Management to submit a Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy covering the period of 2022-2025 for the Board's consideration at its Sixty-Second Session.

Item 10: Finance and budget

Item 10a: Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 and Report of the Board of Auditors

The Board took note of the audited financial statements for the year-ended 31 December 2019 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. The Board

requested Management to keep the Board apprised of the cost recovery situation and to propose a possible new formula at the Sixty-Third Session of the Board. The Board requested Management to report on the migration of the Oracle Cloud ERP at the Sixty-Second Session of the Board.

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 2020-2021

The Board adopted the revision to the programme budget for the biennium 2020-2021 as proposed and took note of the update on risks to The Defeat-NCD Partnership.

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

The Board took note of the update on the use of the revolving fund from the General Fund and Management's commitment to strictly adhering to the established conditions, criteria and procedures of the revolving 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 work with UNITAR to raise the visibility of the Fund and to promote the instrument within 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 Management's update and requested Management to continue the experimental proposal for one full budget and audit cycle, involve all stakeholders such as donors and the UN Board of Auditors, and present a full-scale update and recommendation to the Board at its Sixty-Second Session.

Item 10j: Elections of the Finance Committee

The Board requested the Executive Director to continue consultations with Trustees on elections to the Finance Committee.

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

The Board requested the Executive Director to consult Trustees as a follow-up to the session on the proposed dates of 11 to 12 November 2021 or 18 to 19 November 2021 for the Sixty-Second Session of the Board. The Board agreed to adopt the key decisions and the report on the conclusions and recommendations of its Sixty-First Session as a follow-up to the session.