
UNITAR

UNITAR Board of Trustees
Forty-Second Session
Geneva
27- 29 April, 2004



United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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

1. The Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) held its forty-second session in Geneva, 27 to 29 April, 2004.
2. The following Board members attended the session or were represented:
 - Ms. Agnes Y. AGGREY-ORLEANS..... (Ghana)
 - Mr. Munir AKRAM (Pakistan)
Alternate: Mr. Faisal Niaz TIRMIZI
 - Mr. Gustavo ALBIN..... (Mexico)
Represented by: Ms. Socorro ROVIROSA
 - Ms. Rasha AL-SABAH (Kuwait)
Alternate: Mrs. Salwa AL-MUTAIRI
 - Mr. Anders BJURNER (Sweden)
 - Mr. Jean-Marc BOULGARIS..... (Switzerland)
Alternate: Mr. Paul GARNIER
 - Mr. Bernard FAUTRIER (Monaco)
 - Ms. Naéla GABR MOHAMED GABR ALI (Egypt)
Alternate: Mr. Ahmed ABDEL LATIF
 - Dr. David HAMBURG ... (USA)

- Mr. Omar HILALE(Morocco)
Alternate: Mr. Azzeddine FARHANE
- Mr. Yuji IKEDA (Japan)
Alternate: Mr. Shigeki KOYAMA
- Mr. Bernard KESSEDJIAN (Vice-Chairman)(France)
Alternate: Mr. Olivier MARTIN
- Mr. Milos KUZVART(Czech Republic)
- Mr. George NENE(South Africa)
Alternate: Mr. Arnold MPEIWA
- Mr. Carlos Antonio da ROCHA PAHANHOS(Brazil)
- Mr. Leonid A. SKOTNIKOV(Russian Federation)
Alternate: Mr. Anatoly KHUDYAKOV
- Mr. SHA Zukang(China)
Representative: Ms. Hongmei DENG

Ex Officio:

- Mr. Marcel A. BOISARD, Executive Director, UNITAR
- Mr. Sergei ORDZHONIKIDZE , representing the Secretary-General
Alternate: Ms. Kumiko MATSUURA-MUELLER

Secretary of the Board

- Ms. Nassrine AZIMI

3. Under **Agenda Item 1 (Adoption of the Agenda)**, **Item 2 (Election of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees)**, **Item 3 (Introduction of new Trustees)** and **Agenda Item 4 (Arrangement of the work of the session)** the Board was informed by its Vice- President that following the resignation of Chief Mbanefo and after consultations among Trustees, in line with the long-standing tradition that the Chairman of the Board is always selected from developing countries, he proposed Ambassador Omar Hilale as the new Chairman. The Board approved the proposal by acclamation. The Board then welcomed two new Trustees, Ambassador Carlos Antonio da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) and Mr Roger Dehaybe (International Agency for Francophonie). The Board also welcomed the nomination of three Trustees for a second term, namely Ambassador Munir Akram (Pakistan), Ambassador Bernard Fautrier (Monaco) and Dr. Milos Kuzvart (Czech Republic).

4. The Board then adopted its agenda and working arrangements for the session.

5. **Agenda Item 5 (Oral Presentations of Selected Programmes)** Following the practice established over the last few years, UNITAR staff presented selected ongoing programmes to the Board, namely those pertaining to:

5.1 International Affairs Management

The presentation provided an overview of the programme's evolution since 1990, showing the gradual development of three main areas of activities, namely (a) training offered free of charge to the diplomatic communities in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi (b) tailor- made training organized on request from Member States and (c) fellowship programmes, the participation in which is based on a competitive selection process. It was highlighted that the requests for tailor-made training have considerably increased over the last few years. Examples of the most recent tailor-made activities were provided, together with an overview of agencies and institutions requesting tailor-made training. Additional services recently offered to the diplomatic communities were presented, including the newly designed web page, a quarterly news bulletin available in French and English, as well as the compilation of a glossary of diplomatic terms used in a multilateral environment. An overview of further ongoing and future activities followed and the presentation ended with a demonstration of a new working tool for diplomats currently under development, namely a CD-Rom on United Nations documentation.

In discussions that followed, Trustees asked about the collaboration with other diplomatic training institutes. Such collaboration exists in different forms with many countries worldwide. The question of selection criteria for fellowship programmes was also raised - apart from the formal requirements such as background, education, relevant professional experience, age limit other criteria such as equitable geographical distribution, fair gender balance, fair representation of least developed countries are taken into account. Reference was also made to the newly offered-one-to-one training sessions that will be offered on a cost-covering basis. In the context of this discussion, the user-friendliness of the new web page was also mentioned.

5.2 Climate Change Programme

Guided by the UNFCCC decisions 2 and 3/CP.7, the UNITAR Climate Change programme seeks to address the capacity constraints of developing countries in implementing Climate Change decisions and policies by strengthening infrastructure, creating regional pools of expertise and promoting the work of organizations in the South. In 2003/2004 the CCP's principal activities have included the development of a new cooperative project with African and Asian partner institutions, and technical assistance to Least Developing Countries in the preparation of their NAPAs. Other projects include the revision of the GEF guide for National Capacity Self Assessments, and supporting the formulation of the National Strategy to Implement the UNFCCC of the Government of Benin.

5.3 Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy

The Principal Coordinator of the UNITAR Programme for Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy presented the work of that programme in four major projects. Board members expressed their appreciation for the programme, its reputation and the importance of the work. The Coordinator explained that funding now comes from a core group of donors who have been supporting the programme for several years, but that UNITAR retains full responsibility and independence for the selection of participants and the design of curriculum. Questions were asked about the feasibility of providing training programmes such as the ones in Africa, for other regions. The Coordinator explained that this could be done if additional funding were available. Questions were also asked about the wider distribution of the lessons learned from the Project for Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The Coordinator explained that, although the Handbook for the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) was an in-house United Nations document, the set of DVDs that had been developed could be used in other training programmes, with the permission of SRSGs. As well, some of the more generic knowledge drawn from the work is being published in various forms, such as book chapters and articles.

5.4 Information Society

UNOSAT is a UNITAR project being executed by UNOPS. Partners in the project include the European Space Agency (ESA), the French Space Agency (CNES), and the European Centre for Particle Physics (CERN) as well as the French and Norwegian governments.

UNOSAT was created in order to provide accurate and up-to-date geographic information to the United Nations system, governments, and implementing partners to best respond to humanitarian needs and to fully incorporate geographic mapping to disaster reduction and prevention policies. UNOSAT offers methodological guidance as well as support in the acquisition and development of satellite imagery and geographic information systems (GIS), and can rapidly deliver cartographic products and maps anywhere in the world by internet. Other services UNOSAT provides include GIS turnkey solutions and services, database hosting and customized web interfaces, e-learning capacity building, as well as technical assistance on site, or remotely. Recent examples of UNOSAT's capabilities include responding to mapping needs of organizations such as UNOCHA, ISDR, UNHCR, UNEP, UNDP, IFAD, and WFP for projects in Nepal, the West Bank, Benin, Afghanistan, Iraq, Namibia, Iran, Morocco, Senegal, Liberia, Somalia and Nicaragua. The future promises a widening of the scope and range of UNOSAT applications, by intensifying the promotion and the use of satellite imagery for humanitarian operations through easy and affordable access. This will be facilitated through the activation of the Charter "Space and Natural Disasters" during emergencies, as well as other initiatives such as GMES, and GEO, and through the UNITAR-CIFAL training network.

5.5 Hiroshima Office for Asia and the Pacific (HOAP)

UNITAR's new regional office in Hiroshima, Japan, was established in July 2003. Over the past nine months HOAP has initiated activities for training government officials, civil society and future trainers of the Asia-Pacific region, working around seven main thematic pillars for its first three-year phase (2003-2006), namely: post-conflict reconstruction, Afghanistan, world cultural and natural heritage sites, international economics and finance, sea and human security, peacekeeping and biodiversity. Along with these specific areas, a cross-cutting theme, namely the development of training methodologies for adult professionals, will form an important part of HOAP's activities and objectives.

The events conducted thus far -- an *Inaugural Conference on Human Capacity-Building in Post-Conflict Countries*, a year-long *Fellowship Programme for Afghanistan* and a *Training Workshop on World's Natural and Cultural Heritage* -- seem to have been both relevant and effective and the Office will continue with some six additional activities in 2004. HOAP's longer-term aim is to become a credible reference in capacity building for the region, and for that purpose it will intensify its training

methodology development and network building. Trustees noted in this context the pertinence of HOAP's emphasis on developing training methodologies and the training of trainers, as human capacity building is at the very heart of post-conflict reconstruction. Trustees also felt that Hiroshima, with its universal resonance and its relevance for initiatives related to post-conflict reconstruction, was an appropriate site for UNITAR's work. The Trustee from Japan underlined the satisfaction of his country with the successful establishment of HOAP. In conclusion, the Board expressed its deep appreciation to the authorities of Hiroshima as well as the Government of Japan for support in hosting the new UNITAR Office.

5.6 International Migration Programme

The International Migration Policy Programme (IMP), an inter-agency activity of UNITAR, UNFPA, IOM and ILO, seeks to strengthen the capacity of governments in developing and transition regions to deal with migration and forced displacement issues and to foster dialogue and cooperation among States in these areas. Over the years, it has received financial support from the Governments of the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and from UNFPA. Since 1998, IMP has facilitated regional meetings in Central and Eastern Europe, Southern Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central Asia and the Caribbean, West Africa, and East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region, involving some 800 senior to middle-level government officials from over 125 developing and transition countries. IMP's contribution to strengthening cooperation on migration policy has been recognized and commended in General Assembly resolutions on Migration and Development since 1999. In 2003-2004, IMP has continued to implement a number of activities.

IMP's principal activity (hosting regional meetings) has been put on hold during the work of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). GCIM, established in January 2004 with the encouragement of the United Nations Secretary-General, will operate for an 18-month period and will make recommendations to the Secretary-General in the summer of 2005.

5.7 Chemicals and Waste Management Programme

The Programme on Training and Capacity Building in Chemicals and Waste Management focused on new developments in four main areas: (1) the work UNITAR has undertaken to assist countries to develop and sustain an Integrated National Programme for Sound Chemicals and Waste Management and a new pilot project supported by the Government of Switzerland supporting four countries; (2) the results of the March 2004 Thematic Workshop on Synergies for Capacity Building under International Agreements addressing Chemicals and Waste Management; (3) UNITAR's efforts to assist countries to develop National Chemicals Management Profiles and the new European Commission -funded project for 15 countries to develop a National Profile, organize a national priority setting workshop and develop a national chemical safety web page; and (4) capacity building assistance for countries regarding the Globally Harmonized System for Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). All of these areas of work can assist countries to meet international commitments and national priorities in the field of sound chemicals management.

The Board was also informed of a new programme to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to undertake activities related to the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). UNITAR has established a successful chemicals and waste management programme that has enabled this programme to come into being. The programme will, initially, assist countries in three different areas: through assisting with the development/updating of a National Chemicals Management Profile as a first step in the development of an Implementation Plan under the Convention (some 18 countries to-date); assisting with executing international aspects of Implementation Plan projects in the Comoros and Pakistan (with more countries expected to request such assistance in the near future); and through a major project to assist 25 Least Developed Countries with action plan development as part of their implementation plan projects under the Convention. The latter is a multi-phase project executed by UNITAR on behalf of UNDP, and is funded by the Global

Environment Facility with support from the Government of Switzerland. Cooperation with the GEF on this scale is a significant milestone for UNITAR. UNITAR will be working in close cooperation with, in addition to the 25 LDCs and UNDP, all other GEF Implementing Agencies in order to meet the project goals.

It was agreed that the UNITAR coordinated work to develop a Virtual Classroom for Pollutant and Release Transfer Registers (PRTRs), developed under the PRTR Protocol of the Aarhus Convention, would be considered at the next meeting.

5.8 Cooperation between UNAIDS Competence Programme (ACP) and the Decentralized Cooperation Programme (DCP)

Since the WSSD in Johannesburg in August-September 2002, the Decentralized Cooperation Programme (DCP) of UNITAR has established 11 associated CIFAL Centres (CIFAL is the French acronym for International Training Centre for Local Authorities/Actors) around the world. Associated CIFAL Centres are platforms for capacity building and knowledge sharing between local authorities, national governments, international organizations, private companies and civil society, on urban sustainable development issues, with particular attention on access to basic services (Water, sanitation, waste management, transport, energy, public health, information and communication). As a result of the collaboration with the Aids Competence Programme, the DCP established a CIFAL Centre in Lyon in February 2004 that will serve as the platform for knowledge sharing between cities and world associations of cities on local responses to HIV/Aids. The self-assessment method, inspired by British Petroleum's knowledge management tools and its application to the field of Aids, is also used by the DCP to promote sharing of know how and South-South city-to-city cooperation on access to basic services.

6. Agenda Item 6 (Programme Budget for 2004-2005)

The Executive Director presented the Trustees with the details of the budgetary status of the Institute, based on the "Programme Budget of the Institute for 2004-2005" as recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in New York in March 2004. For the first time this year the budget has been presented as a biennium document following the specific recommendations of ACABQ.

The Executive Director began his presentation with a reiteration of the specificities of UNITAR's two different funds, namely (1) the General Fund, financed by voluntary contributions and programme support costs (PSC) and used to cover the costs of the central functions of UNITAR in Geneva, diplomacy training in general and the New York Office, and (2) the Special Purpose Grant (SPG) Fund, financed by contributions ear-marked for specific projects. A PSC is charged on all SPG funds. In 2003 the average PSC rate charged by UNITAR was 9.41 %. With regard to PSCs, UNITAR consistently requests donors to respect the standard UN rate of 13%. Though most donors accept this requirement, in some cases a rigid application of the standard amount could jeopardize some funds where donors simply have other imperatives in their policies. The expected PSC for the biennium 2004-2005 were calculated based on the forecast budget for special purpose grant fund. Furthermore a provision of US\$ 500,000 was deducted from the anticipated figure to allow for projects that may not materialize in 2004-2005 in order not to overestimate the expected PSC. The Executive Director also commented on the possibility that the number of staff posts is expected to increase in 2004-2005. This increase is due to the expansion of many of the Institute's programmes and was accepted by the ACABQ as realistic – indeed while the number of posts would increase by 25 %, the amount of additional funds could increase by 45%. The Executive Director stressed that all efforts were being made to

ensure caution in incurring expenditures, while ensuring that the *right* amounts were spent for projects so as to not finish the year with excess of income over expenditure.

7. Under **Agenda Item 7 (Report of Activities)**, the Executive Director presented the remaining programmes of UNITAR. These included the UNITAR New York Office, Debt and Financial Management, Foreign Economic Relations, Programme of Correspondence Instruction in Peacekeeping Operations, Women and Children in Conflict Situations, Decentralized Cooperation and Environmental Law.

As regards the financial picture, he stressed that while the overall results were encouraging, concerns remained about the unstable financial structures of the Institute, namely a weak General Fund versus strong Special Purpose Grant funds. This discrepancy, even though it indicates the rising credibility of UNITAR programmes and a certain success in attracting donor interest and funding, needed to be addressed by the Board.

In this context, the Board spent quite some time discussing the financial situation of the New York Office (NYO). While fully in agreement with the Executive Director that the financial burden of the NYO would be untenable for the General Fund of UNITAR, the Board was nevertheless mindful of the following:

- The success of the training programmes conducted by the NYO for the benefit of diplomats - especially developing country diplomats - assigned to UNHQ (average of 25 training programmes annually, reaching some 1200 participants);
- The high profile of the NYO as the ‘visiting card’ of the Institute at UNHQ;
- The perception of failure that a closure or a too severe reduction of activities of the NYO may create, considering that UNITAR is, ironically, in a phase of its development where it can legitimately be called a ‘success story’;
- The fact that the amounts being discussed for the survival of the NYO are rather small (roughly US\$ 450,000 per year).

The Trustees felt that not all avenues for obtaining additional financial resources or making major savings at the NYO had been exhausted as yet and that more perseverance and creative measures were needed to ensure the survival and strengthening of the NYO. In this regard Trustees discussed a set of ideas and agreed to the following course of action:

- To request the Executive Director and the NYO staff to pursue an active and double-pronged campaign of continuing to seek rent-free premises in New York and mobilizing additional donors to the General Fund with a specific emphasis on core-funding for programmes conducted out of the NYO. Additionally, and in light of pending personnel and management decisions that need to be addressed rather rapidly, the Board decided to give some flexibility to the Executive Director to adjust the operating costs of the NYO, keeping in mind the need to maintain the training programmes offered in New York at their current level;
- To form a subcommittee composed of Geneva-based Trustees from Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Morocco and Switzerland to study the situation. The subcommittee (advised and supported by all Trustees) would work closely with the Executive Director with a view to seeking additional funds for the NYO and for programmes in Nairobi, rent-free premises in New York and Geneva, as well as any support that may be needed in terms of managing the current problems of the NYO.

8. **Agenda Item 8 (Financial Report for the Biennium ended 31 December 2003)** the Board reviewed the financial statements of the Institute. The Board accepted the request of the Executive Director that the amount of US\$ 108,015, currently *obligated* by UNITAR for the maintenance and rent of its offices in Geneva and New York in 2003, be considered a ‘reserve’ until a decision is taken by the United Nations General Assembly. Pending the results of the decision, this amount would either be disbursed to the United Nations or returned to UNITAR.

The Board approved the financial statements of UNITAR for the biennium ended 31 December 2003.

9. **Agenda Item 9, (Possible reduction of Activities funded through the General Fund)** Trustees were sensitive to the arguments of the Executive Director with regard to the particular status and mandate of UNITAR. The Institute was created with the specific aim of serving the training needs of the United Nations Member States, most notably developing countries. Training programmes offered to diplomats in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna were therefore to be seen as capacity building efforts to ensure that developing country representatives partake meaningfully and on an equal footing in multilateral work (even if this does not appear as traditional development assistance). The possible reduction and even cancellation of some of the programmes that UNITAR offers, free of charge, at all main United Nations centres could be considered as a real loss for many developing countries and for the multilateral system as a whole. Trustees decided to address this question in the larger context of their fund-raising strategy for the General Fund.

10. **Agenda Item 10 (Fund-Raising Strategy)**, the Board was pleased to learn of the resumption or increase of contributions by a number of countries, notably Austria, the Bahamas, Botswana, the Czech Republic (which by doubling its contribution as of 2004 had become one of the major donors to the UNITAR General Fund) Iraq, Israel, Mexico (which had also doubled its contribution as of 2003), Oman, South Africa and Turkey. The Board expressed its satisfaction with these recent developments and in particular with the fact that contributions from developing countries were clearly on the rise. However, it expressed concern that there were still too few European contributors to the General Fund.

The Board felt that gaps remained in the overall fundraising strategy of the Institute, as reflected by the discussion regarding the weakness of the General Fund and the rather precarious situation of the New York Office. Many industrialized countries had as yet to resume their contributions of the 1970’s and 1980’s to UNITAR. UNITAR, being one of the smallest entities within the UN family, did not always have enough political clout to ensure that capitals ‘listed’ it as one of the recipients of their voluntary contributions. Additionally, some Member States, while willing to contribute to specific projects (SPG’s) were nevertheless reluctant to contribute to the General Fund or to programmes (such as diplomatic training) that do not fit neatly into development aid packages. It was thus imperative that UNITAR’s role as an institution dedicated, not just to development cooperation but to serving the Member States of the Organization, be better explained and understood.

The Trustees requested the Executive Director to provide them with a set of points and arguments that would allow them to raise awareness about UNITAR in their countries, be it with their governments or with other foundations and even the private sector.

11. **Agenda Item 11, (Rental and Maintenance Costs)** The UNOG Chief of Financial Resource Management Service made a statement on behalf of the United Nations Secretariat.

She reiterated the compliance of both the UN Secretariat and UNITAR with the current decisions in section XIV of General Assembly resolution 58/272 “to cancel the debt of UNITAR in respect of rent and maintenance charges in the amount of US\$ 321,184”. A note from the Director of PPBD in New York was also read to the Board outlining some future possible courses of action. The Board thanked the representative of the Secretariat for the detailed information provided. It also expressed its gratitude to the financial services of UNOG for the excellent contributions provided throughout the year to UNITAR in its management of accounts.

With regard to the current premises of UNITAR in Geneva at the International Environment House, the representative of Switzerland shared some of the concerns of his government as to the availability of enough space in the current building for the future expansion of UNITAR. While affirming that his government remained committed to facilitating the best possible conditions for UNITAR Headquarters in Switzerland, he felt that concerns remained as to the long-term availability of office space. Other options, notably moving to a new adjacent building (the costs of which are higher than the current premises) may have to be explored.

12. **Agenda Item 12 (Format of Presenting Accounts)** The format of the UNITAR accounts continues to pose problems for some donors. The reserves and fund-balance (‘carry-over’ amounts estimated at US\$ 626,461 as of 31 December 2003, a decrease from the previous biennium) were indispensable for UNITAR’s continuity. The Institute receives no assessed contributions or subventions from the UN regular budget and the reserves remained the only source of cash-flow at the start of each calendar year, covering the few posts funded by the General Fund without which, the SPG’s, however well funded, cannot function. Nevertheless, in the accounting practices applied by some governments, these carry-over amounts could appear as *excess funds* for UNITAR, and therefore limit the possibility for these governments to maintain the level of their contributions. Mindful of this problem, the Executive Director was requested to prepare a detailed note as to why and how such an apparent positive balance needed to be set in context. Such a note should allow Trustees to argue for a special understanding of the particular status of UNITAR and the necessity of having a minimum degree of continuity at the beginning of each calendar year for the Institute’s General Fund.

13. **Agenda Item 13, (Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 58/272)** The Board agreed that the follow-up to resolution 58/272 called for a concerted strategy and response from the Trustees and some of their respective missions in New York. The Executive Director therefore committed himself to preparing a short note responding to resolutions following up on resolution 58/272 regarding the rental and maintenance costs and to circulating it within two weeks to all Trustees for comments. Thereafter this note could be sent to New York as the official response of the Board to the aforementioned General Assembly resolutions.

14. **Agenda Item 14, (Follow up to the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Board of Trustees at its forty-first Session)**, All pending issues have now been addressed. After two years of work, the guidelines approved by the Board regarding the status of UNITAR staff seem to be functioning smoothly. The last pending issue in this regard is the establishment of a ‘General Review Board’ to ensure a proper appeals process, were such a necessity to arise. The Chairman will conduct further consultations with the Trustees in this regard and revert to the Executive Director on this issue.

15. **Agenda Item 15, (Follow up to ACABQ Recommendations)**, All the recommendations of ACABQ have been implemented. One particular request of ACABQ had been the use of more in-house UN expertise for the conduct of UNITAR courses. UNITAR therefore conducted an

internal review ('Human Resources at UNITAR') the results of which have been rather illuminating, demonstrating an already extensive use of UN experts and resources for the design and conduct of its programmes.

16. **Agenda Item 16**, (**Follow up to the Recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors**, All the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors have been implemented as per the letter of 29 March 2004 of the UNITAR Finance Officer.

17. Under **Agenda Item 17** (**Any Other Business**), the Board considered that all pending matters had been addressed.

18. **Agenda Item 18**, (**Date and Venue of the next session of the Board.**) The Board decided to hold its next session from 26 to 28 April 2008, i.e. the week immediately following the session of the Commission of Human Rights. Geneva remains the most convenient and cost-effective venue for holding the Board meetings.

19. Under **Agenda Item 19**, (**Adoption of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Board of Trustees.**) The Board unanimously adopted the conclusions and recommendations of its forty-second session.