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Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits to the General Assembly the report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) on the activities of the Institute for the period from January to December 2019 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2020 and 2021.

The Board of Trustees of UNIDIR reviewed the report and approved the programme of work and financial plans at the seventy-fourth session of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, held on 24 June 2020 in a virtual session.

The Board welcomed the report of the Director, which provided a comprehensive account of the Institute's increased scope of activity across a range of diverse disarmament topics. While noting that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had significantly impacted the activities of UNIDIR in 2020, the Board was of the view that continued research outputs and virtual activities demonstrated the Institute's increased capacity and resilience.

The Board noted that the fortieth anniversary of UNIDIR in 2020 provided an important opportunity for the General Assembly to consider the Institute's work and impact over four decades and to explore ways of enhancing its long-term sustainability. The Board expressed concern at the introduction of rental charges for UNIDIR in the Palais des Nations and recommended the continuation of the Institute's 40-year rent-free accommodation arrangement. The Board reiterated its long-standing recommendation that the Institute's subvention be increased proportionate to its contemporary requirements and in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report of July 2018 ([A/73/284](#)).

* [A/75/50](#).



Report of the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on the activities of the Institute for the period from January to December 2019 and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2020 and 2021

Summary

The present report covers the activities and financial status of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for the period from January to December 2019, and the proposed programme of work and financial plan for 2020 and 2021. It was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution [39/148 H](#), in which the Assembly invited the Director of UNIDIR to report annually to it.

UNIDIR is an autonomous institution within the United Nations that conducts independent research on disarmament and related problems, particularly international security issues. For 40 years, the Institute has provided evidence-based research and policy options to support Member States, United Nations entities and expert, industry and civil society stakeholders in advancing practical measures that contribute to a more stable, secure and sustainable world. It is a key implementing partner of the initiative of the Secretary-General, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*.

The Institute's current research agenda, endorsed by its Board of Trustees, is aimed at identifying pathways to reinvigorate multilateral arms control and disarmament in the face of a challenging international political and security environment. In 2019, it initiated several new work streams to explore linkages between disarmament, crisis prevention and sustainable development, and to assess the implications, positive and negative, of new technologies on weapons governance. The Institute achieved a significant impact in translating ideas into policy action in national, United Nations and multilateral disarmament processes. Support for the work of UNIDIR was reflected in the voluntary support provided by an expanded and diverse group of States, which enabled the growth of its programmes, activities and personnel in 2019. Continued strengthening of the Institute's structure and its operating and financial models underpinned the expansion, although significant steps remain to establish a more stable and sustainable foundation for the Institute, all the more so in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

I. Introduction

1. The year 2019 provided ample evidence of the relevance of the call by Secretary-General to put disarmament and non-proliferation at the centre of the work of the United Nations. Global military expenditure saw its largest annual increase in a decade, reaching a total of \$1,917 billion in 2019.¹ Renewed competition between nuclear-armed States was boosted by new, unregulated technological capabilities and the further breakdown of bilateral arms control arrangements between the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Geostrategic tensions imperilled efforts to tackle regional proliferation challenges in Asia and the Middle East. Meanwhile poorly regulated or illicit small arms and ammunition continued to wreak death and destruction among communities around the world.

2. Yet in the face of, and partly because of, these immense challenges, progress in arms regulation was limited in 2019. With the notable exception of continued initiatives around humanitarian disarmament and export control risk assessments, multilateral action on either established or new weapons issues remained stymied. Dialogue within the United Nations disarmament machinery further stalled.

3. In this polarized and mistrustful environment, the need for evidence-based analysis and impartial policy options has never been so great, or so challenging to undertake. It is one of the reasons why the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) continues to play a vital role in multilateral disarmament. Established by collective action 40 years ago, the Institute has engaged consistently on the questions at the heart of international order: the means and methods by which States and people war. It has helped develop knowledge on long-standing issues while generating new ideas for the effective regulation of weapons. UNIDIR has provided sustained, often discreet, technical support to States and multilateral bodies while facilitating the inclusive, transparent dialogue among disarmament stakeholders, State and non-State, that is essential to progress in formal settings.

4. Over the past two years, against a backdrop of eroding arms control, the scale and impact of UNIDIR research and activities have grown considerably. Enabled by voluntary funding from States, the Institute's expansion reflects the relevance of and appetite for innovative thinking and collaborative, multi-stakeholder engagement in tackling some of the most urgent problems of our turbulent world.

II. Programme of work

A. Performance and status of implementation of activities in 2019

1. Research agenda and programmes

5. In 2019, UNIDIR continued to implement the strategic research agenda endorsed by its Board of Trustees (see [A/74/247](#)). The agenda is aimed at providing proactive and responsive policy research on diverse disarmament issues to support Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations, and research and industry stakeholders in taking practical action to strengthen international peace and security and the governance of weapons of all types. It reflects the priorities set out in the initiative of the Secretary-General, *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, in which UNIDIR is a key implementing partner. A core objective of the strategic research agenda is to contribute to efforts to integrate disarmament across the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to ensure that

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 2020.

knowledge, ideas and dialogue on disarmament are accessible to a global audience, including young people and policymakers.

6. In establishing a multi-year agenda, UNIDIR has sought to build in-depth expertise and sustained engagement on a number of disarmament issues under consideration by Member States so as to provide intellectual leadership and strengthen the policy impact of its work. Multi-year scalable programmes also enable the Institute to reflect the disarmament priorities of a diverse international community and to ensure that a focus on one issue does not lead to neglect of other critical areas of work. In 2019, UNIDIR completed the establishment of four cross-cutting programmes: conventional arms, weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons, security and technology, and gender and disarmament, as well as a special regional project exploring past efforts and prospects for a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

7. The upscaling of UNIDIR research was reflected in the Institute's outputs and impact in 2019. Annual publications increased from 22 in 2018 to 42 (see annex I) and the Institute has sought to sustain research quality and impact by engaging its diverse network of global experts, fellows and visiting researchers in its internal and external peer review processes. Key policy impacts in 2019 are set out below.

Conventional arms

8. The largest UNIDIR programme addresses the links between conventional arms control and sustainable peace and development through three research streams: (a) strengthening policy and practice on weapons and ammunition management; (b) integrating conventional arms control into multilateral and national conflict prevention; and (c) exploring how arms control tools can adapt to, and help mitigate, the impact of the urbanization of violence. A feature of the programme is its applied field focus, contributing to national, regional and United Nations operations and initiatives and to the work of multilateral disarmament bodies.

9. In 2019, UNIDIR provided in-country support to a number of West African States, carrying out baseline country assessments and supporting national authorities in developing national road maps for improved weapons and ammunition management in Ghana and Sierra Leone. The work has taken on new urgency for many countries in the region as they seek to respond to burgeoning trafficking of illicit arms and terrorist activity. A total of 11 such assessments have been completed in countries in Africa and the Middle East, and they provide a rich source of information and perspectives for planned regional exchanges on weapons and ammunition management lessons and best practices with the Economic Community of West African States and African Union partners in 2020.

10. In preparation for the establishment of a group of governmental experts on processes pertinent to conventional ammunition management in 2020, UNIDIR generated a series of reports outlining key issues and ideas that could inform the work of the group that were among the most frequently downloaded publications from the UNIDIR website.

11. UNIDIR also explored ways in which States might better mitigate the risk of diversion in arms transfers, work that contributed to the decision by the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty to elaborate a voluntary guide on end use documentation. In 2020, the Institute will examine, with Conflict Armament Research, Small Arms Survey and the Stimson Center, the impact of the Arms Trade Treaty in addressing arms transfer diversions and will identify options to strengthen the role of the Treaty in supporting State parties to address diversion risks.

12. The Institute launched a new initiative in 2019 to explore how conventional arms control assessments and tools could support and be better integrated into United Nations prevention strategies and activities in peace mission and non-mission settings. The cross-system work engages multiple United Nations partners and builds, inter alia, on advice provided by the Institute to inform the recommendations of Security Council-mandated technical assessments of arms embargoes in the Central African Republic and Somalia in 2018 and 2019.

13. As part of its research on the risks and impacts of armed violence in urban environments, UNIDIR produced a major report and facilitated military-to-military dialogue in Europe and Africa on good practices and opportunities to reduce civilian harm from explosive weapons. The findings of that work were cited by a number of Member States in official statements and working papers in the context of consultations to elaborate a political declaration on explosive weapons in populated areas, which were initiated in 2019.

14. At the request of the General Assembly (see resolution [73/67](#)), UNIDIR developed a self-assessment tool for States to strengthen their prevention and preparedness against the threat of improvised explosive devices and successfully piloted the tool in collaboration with over 20 United Nations, State, industry and expert partners. The tool will be integrated into the work of the system-wide United Nations coordination task force on improvised explosive devices and made available to all interested States and parties.

Weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons

15. In the current strained international environment for strategic arms control and disarmament, the UNIDIR weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons programme focuses on identifying ways to: (a) improve predictability; (b) preserve and strengthen existing agreements and regimes; and (c) explore new approaches and options for effective weapons of mass destruction arms control and disarmament.

16. A major component of the work is identifying measures to reduce the risk of the use of nuclear weapons in a year when experts, policymakers and civil society groups around the world warned that the risk of detonation of a nuclear weapon was at its highest since the tensest episodes of the Cold War. In 2019, UNIDIR mapped existing issues and approaches around reducing the risk of nuclear weapons and developed an analytical framework to explore identified risk pathways. The work was presented at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and received positive feedback from Member States, including in official statements. Organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization used the work of UNIDIR on nuclear risk reduction in developing their internal thinking and several of the Institute's recommendations were taken up by nuclear policy actors, including the Nuclear Threat Initiative. In 2020, the work will explore concrete steps to reduce those risks assessed to be highest at the current moment, namely crisis escalation or misperception between adversaries that results in the detonation of a nuclear weapon.

17. Verification of nuclear disarmament is another area of established UNIDIR expertise. In 2019, the Institute issued an important study setting out a new approach that would allow nuclear-armed States to verifiably dispose of fissile materials no longer required for military purposes or to dismantle and eliminate nuclear weapons. Those ideas were taken up in multilateral forums, including the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and were cited in several policy and research publications. As debates on the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and post-Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty arrangements illustrate,

nuclear arms control and disarmament processes must overcome difficult practical challenges and thus interest in the ideas set forth by UNIDIR remains high. In 2020, work in that area will explore the applicability of new verification approaches to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

18. The prevention of an arms race in outer space is one of the Institute's long-standing areas of work that has taken on new urgency in the context of increased inter-State competition, new space actors and technological capabilities. UNIDIR explored options for enhanced transparency and confidence-building measures, some of which were taken up by delegates to the Conference on Disarmament, while its study on ways of verifying space security arrangements was one of the most downloaded reports from the UNIDIR website in 2019. In 2020, the Institute will examine practical incremental steps to improve space security and the increasing challenge posed by missile defence technology and systems.

19. The destabilizing potential of new technologies in a degraded political and security environment was the focus of a joint report in 2019 with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the challenges and opportunities of hypersonic weapons for arms control. The scale of Member State and media interest in the topic led to several Institute events and speaker invitations, including a side meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime. In 2020, UNIDIR will focus on the future of weapons of mass destruction-related arms control and disarmament and how such arrangements could help create a more predictable security environment in the face of rapid technological change.

20. Strengthening the compliance and enforcement of existing weapons of mass destruction-related regimes is a critical part of that effort. Work initiated in 2019 explores lessons learned from across nuclear, chemical and biological weapons regimes and is already generating cross-cutting research and recommendations. Findings presented to the 2019 meeting of experts to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction received positive feedback from Member States and fed into the Chair's summary report. In 2020 and in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, work will focus on options to strengthen review and implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention ahead of its review in 2021.

Project on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East

21. The goal of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has never appeared so distant or so urgent. Long-standing divisions on the issue, as well as rivalries and deep mistrust among States of the region have further diminished policy research and attention on cooperative initiatives to reduce proliferation challenges. Yet absent them, the prospects for conflict and instability within the region and beyond grow.

22. Against that challenging background and with the support of the European Union, in August 2019, UNIDIR launched a new three-year project to examine the past, perspectives and prospects for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The goals of the work stream are to: (a) produce a factual narrative of efforts to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and identify lessons for future efforts; (b) build analytic capacity to support new thinking on regional security issues and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East; and (c) collate ideas and develop new proposals on how to move forward on the issue.

23. An important part of the project is to foster inclusive dialogue and solicit regional perspectives on an issue that has, at times, been explored more outside than

inside the region, including through engaging relevant officials and experts in a series of workshops and fact-finding dialogues in countries of the Middle East. The project was formally launched at a side event at the First Committee of the General Assembly in October 2019, and interviews carried out, inter alia, in the margins of the first Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, held at United Nations Headquarters in November 2019. Early indications point to a high level of interest in the work stream within the region and beyond, not only in the context of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons but also in the context of challenges confronting the Middle East, including the severe impact of COVID-19 on the region.

Security and technology

24. While technological developments have been integral to UNIDIR research over four decades, the scale and speed of current innovations in science and technology, and their implications for international peace, security and development led to the establishment of a dedicated Security and Technology Programme in 2019. Its objectives are to explore: (a) the benefits and risks that technological developments present for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament; (b) support for multilateral knowledge as well as dialogue on key issues to be addressed, including how the arms control toolbox can support the governance of new technologies; and (c) assistance in the development and implementation of multilateral norms on responsible and safe policy and practice.

25. Cyberstability is one of the new programme's areas of focus, which builds on the Institute's long-standing work on cybersecurity. In 2019, UNIDIR launched the Cyber Policy Portal, an online tool containing concise cyberpolicy profiles of all Member States, as well as regional and international organizations. The Portal is receiving over 4,400 monthly page views from 180 States and territories and has been referenced and endorsed by a number of Member States in the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security established by the General Assembly. The Portal was selected for presentation at the Paris Peace Forum, held in November 2019, as a notable contribution to the achievement of cybersafety and cyberstability. Work in 2020 will focus on measures to operationalize existing norms, including on supply chain security, as well as options for strengthening cybercrisis management mechanisms.

26. A second line of investigation is the implications of the increasing use of autonomy and artificial intelligence in weapons systems and other military applications. The work is focused on contributing knowledge and ideas to multilateral discussions on the governance of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, including in the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. As part of that effort, the Institute convened a series of expert workshops on possible options for artificial intelligence "arms control" and produced a study on the role of data in algorithmic decision-making. Work in 2020 will focus on the role of human control in decisions around the use of force.

27. Exploring the positive benefits of innovations in science and technology is an important element of the programme, an early example of which, in 2019, was the exploration of how distributed ledger technologies applications can support and strengthen conventional arms control. The work will be expanded in 2020 to support Member States and multilateral disarmament forums in assessing the challenges and opportunities of innovations in the life sciences for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Gender and disarmament

28. UNIDIR seeks to assist policymakers and researchers in bridging gender and disarmament frameworks with the goals of: (a) achieving gender equality in multilateral disarmament forums, in line with the goals set out in the *Agenda for Disarmament* (actions 36 and 37); and (b) supporting the incorporation of gender perspectives and analyses into arms control and disarmament processes. An important vehicle for the pursuit of those policy objectives is the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, co-chaired by UNIDIR, Canada, Ireland, Namibia and the Philippines to promote dialogue, share knowledge and advance gender-responsive action in multilateral disarmament forums.

29. In 2019, a comprehensive UNIDIR study, “Still behind the curve”, provided an authoritative baseline analysis of current gender balance in arms control and disarmament diplomacy. Data presented in the report was cited by a number of Member States in the First Committee as well as the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and UNIDIR experts were invited to deliver presentations on the topic in forums around the world. On the basis of the research, a number of countries established a fellowship to sponsor and support training for women diplomats participating in United Nations cybersecurity deliberations. UNIDIR cross-programme research on the sex- and gender-specific effects of biological and chemical weapons, presented in “Missing links: understanding sex- and gender-related impacts of chemical and biological weapons”, led to the first side events addressing gender in the Biological Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

30. Together with the International Gender Champions Disarmament Impact Group, UNIDIR produced a gender and disarmament resource pack for multilateral practitioners, containing information and concrete ideas to support diplomats in applying a gender lens to their work. It has been distributed to the chairs and presidents of disarmament bodies and all members of the Conference on Disarmament. The Group also prepared fact sheets with practical options to strengthen gender equality in the Arms Trade Treaty and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, some of which were formally adopted by those forums. A record number of 79 Member States joined the statement of the First Committee on gender and disarmament machinery, which also welcomed the work of the Disarmament Group.

31. The year 2020 marks two decades since the adoption of the landmark Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security. In recognition, UNIDIR will undertake new research on the links between the women and peace and security agenda and disarmament processes, including in the area of conventional arms control and cybersecurity.

2. Knowledge and advisory support

32. Demand for the Institute’s information, technical analysis and expert support doubled in 2019, and the Institute expanded collaboration with United Nations partners and regional organizations. Support to the United Nations disarmament machinery remained at the core of that engagement. To mark 40 years of the Conference on Disarmament, UNIDIR issued a study on the body’s mandate and working methods and convened a high-level panel to discuss options to strengthen the functioning of the Conference in February. Staff continued to provide expert briefings to the body on core agenda items at the request of the respective presidents. In support of the scheduled consideration of space security issues by the Disarmament Commission, UNIDIR produced background papers, convened a workshop for

delegates in New York and briefed informal consultations of the Commission in April. The Director briefed the Security Council at informal consultations on uncrewed aerial vehicles in July. The Institute organized five side events at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly to provide ideas and insights on issues on the agenda of the First Committee.

33. In 2019, UNIDIR served as technical consultant to the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament and the Group of Governmental Experts on Further Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In August, it established a team of international experts to provide technical support to parallel processes established by the General Assembly, the aforementioned Open-Ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace in the Context of International Security (see General Assembly resolutions [73/27](#) and [73/266](#)). The provision of United Nations regular budget resources for group of governmental experts consultancies is the only source of dedicated financial support for such knowledge and advisory services.

34. The Institute continued to expand collaboration with United Nations partners, including by providing technical advice to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia. It provided expertise and briefings and undertook collaborative initiatives on relevant issues, including conflict prevention, women and peace and security, mitigating civilian harm caused by explosive weapons use, digital technology threats and opportunities with the Departments of Peace Operations and Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Health Organization.

35. Collaboration with the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States in the area of conventional arms continued in 2019, and cooperation with the African Union expanded with the initiation of a lessons learned exercise on the weapons and ammunition management experiences of African States in 2020. The Institute will continue its engagement with the Organization of American States on cybersecurity issues in 2020, and it has begun a dialogue with the League of Arab States on potential collaboration to raise awareness of the implications of new technologies for disarmament.

36. In August 2019, UNIDIR took an important step to strengthen its contribution to disarmament education by launching, in collaboration with the Office for Disarmament Affairs, a disarmament orientation course for new diplomats in Geneva. Over the course of one week, 35 delegates from around the world were briefed on relevant disarmament bodies and agendas by a range of experts and representatives. The enthusiastic response by participants and permanent missions has encouraged the Institute and the Office for Disarmament Affairs to repeat the exercise annually, subject to funding. UNIDIR staff continued to lecture at and participate in a wide range of training events around the world and provided regular briefings to visiting scholars, government officials and student groups in Geneva.

3. Dialogue and convening activities

37. One of the unique features of UNIDIR as an autonomous institution within the framework of the United Nations is its convening function. In 2019, the Institute convened over 30 events around the world that drew together State representatives and research, civil society and industry experts for frank and informal discussions on a wide range of disarmament issues. The multi-stakeholder dialogues included focus

groups to review and discuss emerging research or policy tools, such as: the engagement of industry actors to review the Institute's counter-improvised explosive device assessment tool; scenario-based exercises with disarmament diplomats to explore a particular technology and its possible implications for international security, for example, hypersonic weapons; the hosting of research partners and visiting experts to present new work; and more traditional panel-based discussions. In late 2019, the Institute launched a dialogue series to support States in their preparations for the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which included the commissioning of papers reflecting different perspectives on key issues under review. A "tech breakfast" series was also initiated to facilitate regular multi-stakeholder dialogue on emerging technologies that may not yet feature on formal agendas of disarmament bodies.

38. Following a General Assembly request (see resolution [73/32](#)), UNIDIR inaugurated the Innovations Dialogue in August 2019 to explore the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament. Almost 150 participants and speakers from 11 countries examined new digital innovations, which led to the publication of a report and new research partnership initiatives.

39. The Innovations Dialogue joins the UNIDIR space security and cyberstability conferences as one of its annual flagship events with 130 to 150 participants. To facilitate inclusive and diverse engagement from around the world, the Institute has initiated live-streaming of the events and mobilized resources for sponsored participation. It has also explored opening portions of the meetings to the general public and, in 2019, it organized a photo exhibit and film screening to accompany the space security conference. With a view to enhancing linkages between the Geneva and New York disarmament communities, it convened the 2019 cyberstability conference at United Nations Headquarters.

4. Strengthening of the Institute

40. UNIDIR made further progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the first report of the Secretary-General on the Institute to be issued in over 15 years ([A/73/284](#)), with a view to establishing a sustainable and stable funding structure and operating model.

Staffing and operations

41. Attracting and retaining diverse research expertise remained a priority in 2019. UNIDIR engaged the United Nations Office for Project Services as a service provider with a view to offering more attractive and flexible consultant modalities through individual contractor agreements. Over the course of the year, the number of full-time personnel grew from 19 to 28, an increase of 47 per cent, and included, for the first time, field-based personnel. The Institute also initiated a visiting researcher programme, focused on mid-career experts from around the world, and established a non-resident fellowship scheme to benefit from the perspectives of authoritative international voices on disarmament. In 2020, UNIDIR will launch a graduate professional programme that will provide a modest stipend to enable young scholars to gain practical experience in a multilateral policy environment.

42. The Institute's location at the Palais des Nations enables it to interact regularly with disarmament processes and stakeholders and to maintain its active convening role. In December 2019, the Institute and the United Nations Office at Geneva established a memorandum of understanding on costed administrative support services that includes, for the first time, rental charges. The United Nations Office at Geneva anticipates accommodation charges to progressively triple over the next three to five years. As the current cost structure of UNIDIR will not be able to absorb the

charges, the Institute will undertake a review of alternative accommodation options in 2020.

43. As part of its efforts to strengthen operations, the Institute introduced a programme planning and review process that includes programme development, work planning and quarterly implementation reviews, as well as impact monitoring and reporting. Staff received training in results-based management. In 2020, the Institute will focus on strengthening its budget, finance and grant management processes.

Communications and outreach

44. UNIDIR continued to prioritize increased visibility and engagement with global audiences on disarmament. In addition to the online streaming of select events, UNIDIR prioritized the translation of key reports, initially into French and Spanish. In October, it relaunched the UNIDIR website, making publications more accessible and offering new commentary and analyses, leading to a 126 per cent increase in weekly website visits. New multimedia content, including 53 short explanatory videos and animations, helped to expand the Institute's social media presence to over 150 countries, with a 48 per cent increase in followers on the Twitter platform.

45. Investments in online communications are also enabling UNIDIR to better monitor the impact of its work, including by tracking engagement, publication downloads and academic citations. That information complements the participant feedback and evaluations that the Institute now employs for events.

Partnerships

46. To strengthen its engagement with a wider range of stakeholders, UNIDIR continued to pursue effective partnerships with the United Nations and regional and national partners. Institute staff briefed regional groups and continued to provide executive briefings in Geneva on UNIDIR research and activities. A new initiative in 2019 was the convening of meetings in the margins of sessions of the Board of Trustees in New York and Geneva to enable Board members to contribute their expertise and insights to disarmament debates. UNIDIR also initiated a donor forum, which meets every six months, to provide a platform for updates and dialogue on the work of the Institute and its finances.

47. The Institute continued to collaborate with a wide range of research institutes and scholars around the world on specific activities. Strategic partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs continued, and UNIDIR participated in United Nations inter-agency processes on mine action, improvised explosive devices, small arms and light weapons, cyberissues and gender equality. New partnerships were established with the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, as well the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise.

Resource mobilization

48. The number and diversity of Member States that contributed generous financial support to UNIDIR increased in 2019 (see annex III, table 2). A subset of the Institute's donors committed multi-year funding for programmatic activities in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General (see [A/73/284](#)). Such funding is critical as it enables investment in a sustained area of work and increases the potential for policy impact. It also enables UNIDIR to respond flexibly to developments in the international security environment and to explore new or emerging themes in a timely manner.

49. That notwithstanding, the broader trend of increased earmarking of financial contributions presented a growing challenge for the Institute's core operating budget.

Although they represented less than 25 per cent of total expenses, operating costs in 2019 rose as a practical consequence of the increase in UNIDIR programmes, personnel and outreach activities, as well as the introduction of accommodation charges. Of the voluntary funds received in 2019, 11 per cent were unearmarked or directed toward supporting core operations.

50. Given the relatively limited voluntary funding for arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament and in the light of the Institute's mandate and work on sustainable development issues in partnership with recipient countries, UNIDIR successfully obtained eligibility for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development development assistance funding in 2019.

5. Resources and expenditure

51. As a trust fund of the United Nations, UNIDIR is financed through voluntary contributions and a small subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations towards the cost of the Director and staff. With the generous support of 28 donors, total revenue in 2019 amounted to \$4,992,241. Actual revenue for the first quarter of 2020 is also shown in annex III, table 1. Variances between projected (see [A/74/180](#), annex III) and actual voluntary contributions reflect the non-realization of two financing agreements that were under discussion in early 2019. The revenue recorded in 2019 also reflects the signature of four multi-year funding agreements with donor partners. Some 89 per cent of total voluntary contributions received in 2019 was earmarked for specific programmes or activities. The subvention received from the United Nations regular budget was \$275,000 (see annex III, table 2). This figure constituted 6 per cent of the Institute's total income in 2019.

52. Total expenditure in 2019 was \$4,732,647 (see annex III, table 1). Actual expenses for the first quarter of 2020 are also shown. Total expenditure in 2019 was in line with the Institute's projections (see [A/74/180](#), annex II). Variances in specific expense lines between projected and actual expenditure in 2019 can be attributed to the organization of UNIDIR personnel expenses. To simplify and provide greater transparency on UNIDIR personnel costs, the Institute's research personnel expenses were reclassified from "grants and other transfers" to "other expert contracts and fees". "Other expert contracts and fees" cover individual contractors and individual consultants administered by the Institute's service providers, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office for Project Services. The increase in travel and other operating expenses in 2019 is directly proportional to the expansion of UNIDIR programmes, staff and activities over the course of the year. This growth is reflected in the 50 per cent variation in actual expenses between 2018 and 2019.

III. Programme of work and financial plan for 2020

53. The programme of work for 2020, endorsed by the Board of Trustees at its meeting in Geneva on 28 January 2020, reflects the workplans of the Institute's research programmes and is guided by three cross-cutting priorities: (a) strengthening multilateral disarmament processes, including with a view to addressing the implications of new technologies; (b) continued implementation of the *Agenda for Disarmament*, with a focus on efforts to reduce the impact of arms-related violence on civilians; and (c) expanding the Institute's engagement in different regions of the world. In pursuit thereof, the Institute initiated plans for a range of regional workshops and activities in partnership with national and regional partners. It also began preparations to establish a small liaison presence at United Nations Headquarters to facilitate engagement with and reinforce linkages between disarmament-related processes and activities in Geneva and New York. As part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations, the Institute's 2020 plans

included a series of public and targeted events, including a Model United Nations debate to encourage youth engagement on disarmament.

54. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected those plans and the UNIDIR programme of work. The Institute quickly activated business continuity arrangements to enable the maintenance of research, publications, communications and administrative activities. It established a risk assessment framework to guide the resumption of activities and remains in close contact with donor partners regarding the implementation and extension of agreements.

55. However, travel and events have been significantly affected and will continue to be affected for at least the remainder of 2020 and much of 2021. Where feasible, UNIDIR has moved events, such as the launch of reports on nuclear risk reduction and human control in the use of force, as well as dialogues with African and Latin American partners, to online platforms. It has also initiated webinar series on space security and the implementation of norms for cybersecurity. It continues to support those multilateral and plurilateral disarmament processes that have transitioned to virtual activities. Finally, UNIDIR is exploring the potential security implications of the pandemic and has published analyses on differentiated gender impacts and patterns of urban violence, as well as initiating a study on how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect considerations concerning the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction ahead of its review by States parties in 2021.

56. In previous years, UNIDIR made its annual financial projections by averaging revenue and expenses for the five previous years and adding a 1 per cent growth calculation. That approach was divorced from the Institute's substantive work programme and plans. In 2020, building on the programme structure and planning process put in place over the period 2018–2019, UNIDIR revised its projections methodology.

57. Revenue and expenses for 2020 and 2021 are based on estimated voluntary contributions and an assessment of the institutional costs required to implement the agreed work programme and planned activities in 2020 and 2021. The projections take into account established multi-year funding agreements for which disbursement is expected in 2020 and 2021, as well as discussions that are under way with donors in the first quarter of 2020. On that basis, the financial expenditure to support the 2020 programme of work is projected to be \$5,648,000, as shown in annex IV.

58. While resource mobilization efforts will continue over the course of 2020, including to broaden the Institute's donor base, the implications of the global COVID-19 pandemic for the financial resources of Member States and private foundations are already severe. UNIDIR anticipates a significant decline in revenue in 2021 and is taking steps to reduce expenditure by that date, as shown in annex V. The figures in annex V assume no further increase in rental charges will be introduced in 2020.

IV. Conclusion

59. On the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the need for renewed, as well as new, forms of international cooperation to address global challenges has never been so evident. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the scale of global interdependence, as well as the fragility and shortcomings of its current governance. The need for arms regulation drove the establishment of the multilateral system following the Second World War. A central question now is whether existing frameworks can address the simultaneous threats of nuclear competition and proliferation, new weapons technologies and the undiminished spread of conventional weapons.

60. UNIDIR illustrates that nimble, collaborative policy actors, working in support of States and multilateral processes, can make a tangible contribution to international peace, security and development through impartial, evidence-based ideas and practical tools and options. In so doing, the Institute is facilitating the inclusion of new and more diverse voices that can help adapt the multilateral system to better address the unprecedented existential challenges we now face.

61. UNIDIR marks its fortieth year in an unprecedented moment of growth. That it is doing so reflects the interest in and commitment of many States to forging pathways to overcome the current difficult environment and find new, effective ways to advance disarmament. The COVID-19 pandemic underscores that urgency and is likely to offer lessons for enhancing efforts against biological weapons. At the same time, the pandemic will drastically affect the voluntary funding environment, on which UNIDIR depends almost entirely. The Institute's fortieth anniversary is an occasion to reflect on its achievements but perhaps more important, to equip it to contribute sustainably to the renewal of a truly global system of collective security.

Annex I*

Publications 2019

Conventional arms

- A Menu of Options to Enhance the Common Understanding of End Use/r Control Systems to Strengthen their Role in Preventing Diversion
- Conventional Ammunition Management: A Gap Analysis (*also available in French and Spanish*)
- Enhancing the Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities of Industry and States to Prevent Diversion: An Issue Brief
- Key Issues and Processes Pertinent to the Management of Conventional Ammunition: Report of the First Seminar (*also available in French and Spanish*)
- Key Issues and Processes Pertinent to the Management of Conventional Ammunition: Report of the Second Seminar (*also available in French*)
- Key Issues and Processes Pertinent to the Management of Conventional Ammunition: Report of the Third Seminar (*also available in French*)
- Opportunities to Strengthen Military Policies and Practices to Reduce Civilian Harm from Explosive Weapons: A Food for Thought Paper (*also available in French*)
- Opportunities to Improve Military Policy and Practice to Reduce Civilian Harm from Explosive Weapons in Urban Conflicts: An Options Paper (*also available in French*)
- Preventing Diversion in Conventional Arms Transfers: Exploring Contributions of Industry and Private Sector Actors
- Utilizing the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines in Conflict-Affected and Low-Capacity Environments

Weapons of mass destruction and other strategic weapons

- Compliance and Enforcement in the Biological Weapons Regime
- Compliance and Enforcement in WMD-related Treaties
- Compliance and Enforcement: Lessons from across WMD-related regimes
- Compliance Management under the Chemical Weapons Convention
- Electronic and Cyber Warfare in Outer Space
- Eyes on the Sky: Rethinking Verification in Space
- Hypersonic Weapons: A Challenge and Opportunity for Strategic Arms Control (with Office for Disarmament Affairs)
- IAEA Mechanisms to Ensure Compliance with NPT Safeguards
- Mandate and Working Methods in the Conference on Disarmament
- Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance Resolution in United States-Russian Arms Control

* Annex I is being issued without formal editing and in the language of submission only. This list excludes commentary pieces and shorter analysis pieces available on the UNIDIR website at www.unidir.org.

- Nuclear Risk Reduction: A Framework for Analysis
- Nuclear Risk Reduction: The State of Ideas
- Reversing the Slide: Intensified Great Power Competition and the Breakdown of the Arms Control Endeavour
- Shared Risks: An Examination of Universal Space Security Challenges
- The Implications of Hypersonic Weapons for International Stability and Arms Control: Report on a UNIDIR-Office for Disarmament Affairs Turn-based Exercise
- The Role of Weapon and Ammunition Management in Preventing Conflict and Supporting Security Transitions
- UNIDIR Space Security Conference Report 2019
- Watch Them Go: Simplifying the Elimination of Fissile Materials and Nuclear Weapons

Security and technology

- Cyber Stability Conference 2019: Strengthening Global Engagement
- Innovations Dialogue Report 2019
- Stemming the Exploitation of ICT Threats and Vulnerabilities (*also available in French*)
- The Role of Data in Algorithmic Decision-Making
- The Role of Regional Organizations in Strengthening Cybersecurity and Stability

Gender and disarmament

- Fact Sheet on Gender in Cyber Diplomacy
- Fact sheet on Gender in the ATT
- Gender & Disarmament Resource Pack
- Missing Links: Understanding Sex- and Gender-Related Impacts of Chemical and Biological Weapons
- Still Behind the Curve: Gender Balance in Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Diplomacy

Annex II

Explanatory note to financial annexes

Figures shown in annex II are based on the statement of financial performance of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for the year 2019. The statement was prepared in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). Voluntary contributions and other transfers are recognized as revenue at the time the supporting legal agreement becomes binding. In most cases, this is upon signature by both parties. Under these standards, the total amount of contributions, including those with multiple instalments and/or with implementation periods greater than 12 months, is recognized as revenue in the year when the supporting legal agreement is signed. For further information on IPSAS, as well as the basis for the preparation of UNIDIR financial statements, see [A/71/162](#), annex I, and [A/72/154](#), annex I.

Details regarding terms used in the financial statement are provided below. The details are drawn from information circular [ST/IC/2013/36](#). Text in italics further details the application of these lines to UNIDIR.

Revenue

Voluntary contributions	Voluntary contributions, in cash and goods in kind Contributions from non-Member States <i>Refunds to donors</i>
Other transfers and allocations	Allocations from other funds <i>Subvention from the United Nations regular budget</i> <i>Allocations from United Nations common system entities</i>
Investment revenue	Investment revenue Coupons and gains Bank balance interest Realized market gain (loss) Unrealized market gain (loss) Net of investment expenses
Other/miscellaneous revenue	Revenue from rental of premises Foreign exchange gains Other miscellaneous income Gain on sale of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets Internal transfers of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets Tax equalization – staff assessment income

Expenses

Employee salaries, allowances and benefits	<i>Staff contracts administered by the United Nations Secretariat</i> Staff salaries and wages, allowances, including taxes and education grant home leave, family visit, rest and recuperation and education grant travel
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	Expenses for long-term and post-employment employee benefit liabilities, termination benefits, net actuarial gains (losses), contribution to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
	Actuarial pension contribution corrections (e.g. owing to changes in demographic factors)
	General temporary assistance compensation and allowances
	Travel on appointment
<i>Other expert contracts and fees</i>	<i>Individual contractors and individual consultants administered by the United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Office for Project Services</i>
	<i>Travel for this category of expert personnel</i>
	<i>Non-military personnel compensation and allowances</i>
	<i>United Nations Volunteers</i>
	<i>Interpreters and translators (non-staff)</i>
	<i>Ad hoc experts</i>
Grants and other transfers	Outright grants and other transfers to implementing agencies and partners and other entities (<i>United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, Central Emergency Response Fund, etc.</i>)
	Quick-impact projects
Supplies and consumables	Cost of inventory used
	Expenses for supplies
Travel	Travel of staff
	Travel of representatives (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, meeting participants, delegates, etc.)
Other operating expenses	Rent, utilities
	Contracted services
	Doubtful debt expenses
	Net foreign exchange losses
	Maintenance expenses
	Insurance, etc.
	Recruitment expenses
	Training, travel on training and travel on transfer
	Expenses related to financing activities
	Bank charges
	Credits to Member States for staff assessments
	Loss on sale of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets
	Foreign exchange losses

Annex III

Table 1
Actual revenue and expenses for 2019 and first quarter of 2020

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Description</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>First quarter 2020^a</i>
Revenue		
Voluntary contributions	4 445	71
Other transfers and allocations	371	103
Investment revenue	173	5
Other revenue	3	34
Total revenue	4 992	213
Expenses		
Employee salaries, allowances and benefits ^b	1 638	387
Other expert contracts and fees ^c	1 805	156
Grants and other transfers	275	0
Supplies and consumables	1	0
Travel ^d	343	135
Other operating expenses	414	62
Programme support expenses	256	66
Total expenses	4 732	806
Surplus/(deficit) for the year^e	260	(593)

^a Position as of 8 April 2020.

^b This represents staff contracts administered by the United Nations Secretariat.

^c This encompasses consultants and individual contracts administered by the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Project Services. This expense line also covers travel for this category of other expert personnel.

^d This represents the travel of staff, as well as of meeting participants attending events of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

^e These funds include multi-year pledges signed in 2018 and 2019 and are earmarked per financing agreements with donors. The amount at year-end is determined by the date at which contribution agreements are signed as well as programme and project implementation periods, which do not systematically cover a calendar year.

Table 2
Voluntary contributions for 2019

(United States dollars)

<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>
A. Voluntary contributions^a	
Australia	38 541
China	20 000
European Union ^{a,b}	1 250 714
Finland ^a	331 319
France	182 002
Germany ^a	637 837
Holy See	10 000

<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>
India	30 000
Iraq	2 000
Ireland	222 222
Japan	33 226
Luxembourg	11 111
Mexico	10 000
Netherlands ^a	235 294
New Zealand	36 726
Pakistan	3 731
Qatar	30 000
Republic of Korea	20 000
Russian Federation	100 000
Spain	10 941
Sweden	314 961
Switzerland ^a	722 895
United Arab Emirates	10 000
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	128 700
Fondation pour la recherche stratégique	22 447
Simons Foundation Canada	10 000
Refund to donors	(37 109) ^e
Present value adjustments	57 625 ^d
Subtotal, voluntary contributions	4 445 183
B. Other transfers and allocations	
Subvention from the United Nations regular budget	275 000
Office for Disarmament Affairs ^e	105 900
Refund to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation	(9 458) ^f
Subtotal, other transfers and allocations	371 442
Total	4 816 625

^a These donors provide multi-year contributions. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research acknowledges the multi-year contribution from Norway, which was recorded in 2018.

^b Contribution considered conditional as per International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) 23. Revenue is recognized during the course of the project as specific goods or services are provided per the terms of the agreement.

^c Of this amount, 75 per cent is for activities that concluded in 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. Refunds in 2019 were 63 per cent lower than in 2018.

^d IPSAS-based adjustment for future cash receipts (pledges for future years) per United Nations Policy Framework for IPSAS, para. 18.4.4.

^e Earmarked funding for, inter alia, advisory services to support groups of governmental experts.

^f Implementation of the project ended on 31 March 2019.

Annex IV

Projected revenue and expenses for 2020

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Description</i>	<i>2020</i>
Pledged contributions receivable in 2020	1 605
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	4 220
Other transfers and allocations	372
Investment income	107
Other revenue	34
Total revenue	6 338
Expenses	
Direct expenditure	
Employee salaries, allowances and benefits	1 972
Other expert contracts and fees	2 063
Grants and other transfers	783
Supplies and consumables	1
Travel	250
Other operating expenses	579
Total expenses	5 648
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	690

^a Includes a contribution of \$800,463 from the European Union that is considered as conditional per International Public Sector Accounting Standards 23. The inclusion of this contribution assumes implementation by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research of activities per signed agreement terms.

Annex V

Projected revenue and expenses for 2021

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Description</i>	<i>2021</i>
Pledged contributions receivable in 2021	619
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions ^a	4 467
Other transfers and allocations	340
Investment income	90
Other revenue	22
Total revenue	5 538
Expenses	
Direct expenditure	
Employee salaries, allowances and benefits	1 562
Other expert contracts and fees	1 851
Grants and other transfers	889
Supplies and consumables	1
Travel	309
Other operating expenses	592
Total expenses	5 204
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	334

^a Includes a contribution of \$1,118,391 from the European Union that is considered as conditional per International Public Sector Accounting Standards 23. The inclusion of this contribution assumes implementation by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research of activities per signed agreement terms.