



Governing Council
Sixty-seventh Session

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Hybrid format

STATEMENT BY THE STAFF ASSOCIATION

1. On behalf of the Staff Association Committee (SAC), I would like to thank the Governing Council for the opportunity to speak with you today about the work and achievements of the Staff Association over the previous twelve months.
2. The main role of the SAC is to assist staff working at the Agency and represent their rights and their interests to management.
3. The SAC elected in May 2023 continued to serve the 250 IARC staff with only seven members, and one part-time secretary as exceptionally approved at the General Meeting. Despite the limited number of members which impacted our ability to act wherever we would have liked, I am very proud of this team whose energy and enthusiasm demonstrate again a real commitment to making IARC an even better place to work.
4. In November 2024, a representative of the SAC attended the 23rd meeting of the Global Staff Management Council (GSMC) in Washington, USA, hosted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). This meeting is partially supported financially by IARC management and brings together representatives of management and staff association committees of WHO headquarters, WHO Global Services Centre, the six WHO Regional Offices, IARC and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Of the topics discussed, the ones that will directly affect the staff at IARC the most, are the implementation of new contractual modalities in 2025, Staff Health and Well-being, promoting a respectful workplace at WHO and the WHO Internal Justice System, as a clear and efficient process would help to protect staff members' rights.
5. The SAC also sent two members to the 78th Council of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) in Paris, last February. Our delegates took part in several working groups' meetings on topics including emerging trends in the Pension Fund; United Nations (UN) policies on teleworking and efforts for harmonization across the UN Common System; ongoing revision of ICSC methodology for the hardship classification; D/E¹ duty station pilot continuation; differences in danger-related benefits and allowances for locally and internationally recruited staff members.

¹ A to E UN duty stations are rated on a scale that assesses the difficulty of working and living conditions from A to E, with A being the least and E, the most difficult. Categories are arrived at through an assessment of the following six discrete factors: health, security, local conditions, isolation, climate, and housing.

Attending the GSMC meeting and the FICSA Council is very important as it contributes to maintain IARC Staff Association's ties with other WHO and UN Staff Association Committees.

6. The SAC met every week and at least once monthly with the Human Resources Officer and the IARC Staff Physician until mid-September. These meetings are very important to have ongoing and open lines of communication. Unfortunately, since 13 September 2024, we do not have an IARC staff physician which poses a problem from a medical surveillance point of view.

7. The SAC communicates on its action during a dedicated time at IARC's monthly Town Hall meetings, the display of posters throughout the building for special issues, and via general communications on the intranet and by e-mail.

8. As usual, the SAC coordinated the recreational and physical activities at IARC and also organized the children's Christmas party at IARC premises as well as the personnel's Christmas party in an external location. All activities and social events are always very appreciated by all IARC personnel.

9. The SAC launched the 2024 anonymous Work Climate Survey (WCS) for all personnel to express their opinion on their employment conditions. The results of this survey on the work climate at IARC were mixed and highlighted some cases of harassment. This led us to conduct a new specific survey and to identify solutions with the management to address permanently this critical situation. A specific meeting on this topic has been held with the management on 27 January 2025.

10. We firmly believe that open and honest communication between the SAC and the management is instrumental to advancing and nurturing staff interests and well-being while best accomplishing the missions of the Agency.

11. To go a step further this year, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been prepared by the SAC and is currently under review by the management. This is a bilateral agreement which define both roles and responsibilities. The signature of this MoU is a very important stage of collaboration as it will officially and sustainably confirm mutual respect and trust between the SAC and the IARC management for the future.

12. The recent decision by the United States of America to withdraw from WHO has caused great concern among IARC staff, and we are counting on the management to continue to inform the SAC and IARC staff to clarify the situation as regularly as possible.

13. As Chair of the SAC, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for their commitment and dedication and once again, I thank the Director and the members of the Governing Council for this opportunity to address the Council today.