International Agency for Research on Cancer

World Health Organization

Governing Council
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MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING

IARC, Lyon and web conference

Wednesday, 27 May 2026, at 13:50 Central European Summer Time (CEST)

Chairperson: Professor Dorothy KEEFE (Australia)

Secretary: Dr Elisabete WEIDERPASS, Director, IARC

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Participating State Representatives

Australia
Professor Dorothy Keefe, **Chairperson**
Mr Jonathan Godin
Ms Sam Hampton
Ms Merilyn Penn [remotely]

Qatar
Dr Al-Hareth M. Al-Khater, **Vice-Chairperson**
Dr Noora Mohammed A. Al Hammadi

Japan
Mr Masato Izutsu, **Rapporteur**
Ms Miki Kunimura
Dr Hiroyuki Mano
Mr Yutaka Matsuoka
Ms Michiko Taniguchi [remotely]
Dr Wakako Toga
Mr Shohei Yamauchi [remotely]

Austria
Ms Elisabeth Tischelmayer [remotely]

Belgium
Mr Arno De Potter
Ms Anne Swaluë [remotely]

Brazil
Dr João Paulo de Biaso Viola
Dr Ronaldo Corrêa Ferreira da Silva [remotely]
Ms Livia de Oliveira Pasqualin [remotely]
Dr Luis Felipe Ribeiro Pinto
Dr Marcia Sarpa de Campos Mello [remotely]

Canada
Dr Emma Ito
Ms Jennifer Izaguirre

China
Mr Xiaochen Yang
Mr Wanqing Chen
Dr Jie He
Ms Ni Li
Ms Wen Liu

Denmark
Dr Morten Frisch [remotely]

Egypt
[No representative]

Finland
Dr Mika Salminen [remotely]
Dr Tuula Helander [remotely]

France
Professor Norbert Ifrah
Mr Nicolas Albin
Ms Aya Amour [unable to attend]
Ms Roxane Berjaoui [remotely]
Dr Thomas Dubois

Germany
Dr Alina Brandes
Mr Chris Braun [remotely]

Hungary
Professor Gabriella Liszkay [remotely]
Dr Emoke Soos [remotely]
Ms Nelli Benefi-Zatureczki [remotely]

India
Dr Saroj Kumar
Dr Tanvir Kaur Gandhi [remotely]

Iran (Islamic Republic of)
[No Representative]

Ireland
Mr James Scully [remotely]

Italy
Dr Mauro Biffoni [remotely]

Morocco
Dr Loubna Abousselham
Dr Youssef Chami Khazraji [unable to attend]

Netherlands (Kingdom of the)
Ms Dagmar Stolte

Norway
Professor Tone Bjørge [remotely]
Dr Karianne Solaas [remotely]

Portugal
Professor Isabel Cristina Fernandes
Dr Cristina Portugal

Republic of Korea
Dr Lee Ha Rim
Dr Sunghoo Hong

Russian Federation
Dr Eduard Salakhov [unable to attend]
Mr Anton Minaev
Mr Ivan Tarutin
Dr Elena Kirsanova [unable to attend]
Dr Maksim Kurbatov [unable to attend]

Saudi Arabia
Professor Mushabbab Al Asiri [remotely]
Dr Ali Saeed AlZahrani [remotely]

Spain
[No Representative]

Sweden
Professor Madeleine Durbeej-Hjalt [remotely]

Switzerland
Mrs Mari Viro Moser
Mrs Noemi Fivat [remotely]

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Dr Mark Palmer
Dr Isobel Atkin
Dr Louisa Rahemtulla [remotely]

United States of America
Ms Julie M. Jolles
Mr Mark Daghir [remotely]
Ms Maya Levine [remotely]
Ms Lauren Mikulsky [remotely]
Mr Lars Spjut [remotely]

World Health Organization
Dr Alarcos Cieza [remotely]
Dr Andre Ilbawi [remotely]
Ms Claudia Nannini

Observers
Scientific Council
Dr Sirpa Heinävaara
Outgoing Chairperson

Professor Young-Woo Kim
Incoming Chairperson

Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)
Mr Philippe Guinot

IARC Ethics Committee
Professor Samar Alhomoud

External Audit
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Ms Anne-Claire Bregnac
Ms Valeria Doehler
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Ms Maryna Ginko
Ms Amandine Mouillard-Etienne
Ms Jean Murray
Ms Mariia Oganezova
Ms Erin Rai
Ms Valérie Servant
Ms Galina Tarasenko
Mr Harry Owen Ungoed-Thomas
Ms Charlotte Wren

Précis-writers
Ms Michèle Abdou
Ms Teresa Lander

1. REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING OF IARC – ACTIVITY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Item 12 of the Agenda (Document GC/68/8)

The CHAIRPERSON said that it was her understanding that four separate draft resolutions would be considered under the present item.

Mr de POTTER (Belgium), speaking as Chair of the IARC Sustainable Financing Working Group, said that he would present the key findings from the work of the Group over the previous year and the recommendations presented for the consideration of the Governing Council. The work went beyond short-term financial concerns, aiming to establish a more predictable, resilient and structured financing framework that aligned with IARC's scientific mandate and preserved its mandate. The Working Group had been established to support IARC in strengthening the sustainability, predictability and flexibility of its financing, in alignment with the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2026–2030. Its mandate included defining the concept of sustainable financing for IARC, assessing the financial situation and associated risks, reviewing funding mechanisms, and developing recommendations to strengthen the stability and adequacy of resources. Over the previous year, the group had held five meetings and structured its work around four main areas: financial outlook and risks; the sustainable financing framework of IARC; governance and oversight; and contributions and arrears. It had been a structured and evidence-based process, supported by regular input from the Secretariat, including on the development of the MTS and the investment case.

The Working Group had made some key findings: IARC faced increasing constraints in a context of zero nominal growth, combined with flexibility in its budget structure; there was a clear need to secure resources more predictably and in advance, and to reduce reliance on short-term and highly earmarked funding. The Working Group had developed a sustainable financing framework based on the principles of predictability, flexibility and resilience, while emphasizing the importance of safeguarding scientific independence and supporting long-term research. There was a need for a more structured and well-governed financing and model, to address the Agency's current constraints and support its mission over the longer term.

On the first key proposal, to strengthen governance and oversight, the Working Group had identified that the Governing Council had limited time to engage in detailed budgetary and administrative matters, despite their increasing importance and complexity. To address that issue, it was proposed to establish the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (IBAC) as a standing advisory body to the Governing Council. The Committee would allow for more detailed and continuous review of financial, administrative and oversight issues, and would support more informed decision-making at Governing Council level. The proposal drew on practices in other United Nations organizations and aimed to strike a balance between efficiency, through a defined membership, and transparency, through the participation of observers.

A second reform concerned the system of assessed contributions. IARC contributions were calculated in two parts: 70% of the budget was shared equally among all Participating States, meaning that each country contributed the same base amount. The remaining 30% was distributed through a group system, which reflected countries' economic capacity based on the WHO scale of assessments. Under the system, Participating States were classified into different groups according to their share in the

WHO scale. Countries with higher assessed capacity were placed in higher groups and contributed more units; countries with lower assessed capacity were placed in lower groups and contributed fewer units, or in some cases none. The structure aimed to strike a balance between solidarity, through equal contributions, and fairness, through differentiation according to capacity. However, the Working Group identified that the structure might still create barriers for very small economies and low-income countries. To address that issue, the proposal was to introduce a new lower Group 6, applicable to countries contributing less than 0.05% on the WHO scale. Those countries would contribute a reduced share of the equal component and would not contribute to the variable 30% component. The objective was to facilitate accession and broaden participation, and to strengthen the global representation of the Agency, while modestly expanding the funding base.

A complementary proposal concerned adjustments to the thresholds defining the different groups. Changes in the WHO scale of assessments could shift countries between groups, sometimes leading to abrupt changes in contributions. The Working Group proposed to revise the thresholds for the existing groups, while keeping the underlying unit structure unchanged. In practice, it would mean recalibrating the ranges for each group so that they better reflected the updated WHO scale. The aim was to: smooth transitions between groups; improve predictability for countries; and maintain overall fairness and stability in the system. In essence, this proposal adjusted the parameters without changing the core architecture of the contribution model.

The third reform area related to the Working Capital Fund and the management of arrears. The Working Group confirmed that the Working Capital Fund should remain focused on its primary role of managing short-term liquidity and should not be used to cover longer-term financing gaps. At the same time, it was recognized that budgeting based on contributions that had not been received could create distortions and operational risks. To address that concern, the proposal was to introduce a General Reserve mechanism. Under that approach, contributions from countries in prolonged arrears would be included in the budget but placed in a separate line and not programmed for expenditure unless and until they were received. It would improve budget realism, strengthen financial discipline, and better protect programme implementation.

Based on its work, the Working Group had submitted five main recommendations: to establish the IBAC; to extend the mandate of the Working Group for one year to support the transition to the IBAC; to amend the contribution system by creating Group 6; to amend the contribution system, with the adjustment of grouping thresholds; and to introduce the General Reserve mechanism. Taken together, the proposals aimed to improve the sustainability, fairness, governance and predictability of IARC's financing. The proposals formed a coherent package of reforms that would strengthen IARC's financing model, making it more inclusive and resilient, while safeguarding the Agency's scientific independence and long-term mission.

Ms IZAGUIRRE (Canada) said that Canada recognized the increasingly complex financial pressures facing many multilateral organizations, including IARC, and commended the Secretariat for its proactive and innovative efforts to address those challenges. Sustainable financing encompassed several key elements, including predictability, flexibility, and resilience. The recommendations presented to the Governing Council demonstrated progress across each of those dimensions and introduced focused efforts to respond to longstanding concerns, such as over-reliance on the Working

Capital Fund. Canada was pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the Working Group. The recommendations put forward demonstrated the importance and effectiveness of dedicated discussion on IARC's administrative and financial matters. She welcomed the establishment of the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (IBAC) to formalize efforts within the Agency's governance structure.

Mr MINAEV (Russian Federation) thanked the Working Group for the intensive and important work it had carried out over the previous year and shared the conclusions set out in its report. The Russian Federation supported the creation of the new standing committee of the Governing Council, the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (IBAC): it could make a significant contribution to strengthening accountability, increasing transparency and enabling the involvement of Participating States in issues related to sustainable financing.

Dr RIBEIRO PINTO (Brazil) said that IARC needed financial independence in order to act independently in the face of commercial pressures. Brazil therefore fully supported the goal of financial stability and would make a voluntary contribution of approximately €100 000, as recently announced by the Minister of Health of Brazil.

The CHAIRPERSON thanked Dr RIBEIRO PINTO for the very generous financial contribution of Brazil to the Agency.

Dr BRANDES (Germany) thanked the Working Group and the Secretariat for the comprehensive report and for the work undertaken over the previous year. Germany supported the overall objective of strengthening the sustainability, predictability, and flexibility of IARC's financing. She welcomed that the report placed strong emphasis on protecting IARC's core scientific functions, as sustainable financing must first and foremost safeguard IARC's unique added value. There was merit in establishing a dedicated IARC Budget and Administration Committee, which could strengthen the Governing Council's capacity to review budgetary, financial, administrative, and oversight matters in greater depth. At the same time, its structure, mandate, and working methods should ensure transparency to all Participating States, with clear reporting to the Governing Council, access for observers where appropriate and efficient working methods; she sought further clarification regarding those points.

On the proposed adjustment to the method of assessment, Germany understood the objective to reflect the updated WHO scale of assessments while avoiding disproportionate disruptions and maintaining fairness and predictability. Germany was also open to the creation of a lower contribution Group 6, as it might facilitate broader geographical participation and help widen IARC's funding base. At the same time, any changes to contribution models must be handled with great care. Financial implications for existing Participating States should be clearly presented, regularly monitored, and kept transparent.

It was essential that the proposed changes did not create automatic additional financial obligations for Participating States beyond the regular budgetary decisions of the Governing Council. Regarding the proposed General Reserve mechanism for prolonged arrears, Germany recognized the intention to improve budget realism and avoid programming resources that might not materialize. However, she would appreciate the Secretariat's confirmation that all relevant legal, accounting, and budgetary principles had been considered when establishing a reserve line that reflected the outstanding assessed contributions. Any mechanism dealing with prolonged arrears should be transparent, legally sound, and should not weaken the principle that assessed contributions were due in full and on time. She looked forward to continued constructive engagement on sustainable financing.

Mr IZUTSU (Japan) expressed sincere appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the Working Group in advancing sustainable financing for IARC. Regarding Recommendation 1, he recognized its importance in strengthening IARC's governance. However, it would not be easy for Japan to adopt recommendations that had significant implications for governance without sufficient prior explanation and consultation with Participating States. He urged the Secretariat to improve transparency, including through timely and regular briefings and information sessions.

On proposal 3, the explanation regarding the background of the discussions on adjusting the thresholds was insufficient. He would appreciate further clarification, including a clear presentation of how the financial contributions of each Participating State would be affected by the proposal.

With respect to the creation of Group 6, while he supported the overall direction, it represented a significant change from the traditional system where Participating States had shared contributions more evenly. He asked what analysis had been conducted on its impact and what future outlook was envisaged.

Regarding proposal 4, while he agreed with the general approach, he would appreciate clarification on what specific disadvantages or risks might arise should the proposal not be approved. While he commended the Working Group and Participating States for their sincere and constructive discussions, further detailed explanations would be required before the proposals could be approved by the Governing Council.

Mrs MOSER (Switzerland) thanked the Working Group for the efforts made to find a solution to secure sustainable, predictable and flexible financing. Switzerland supported the creation of the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (IBAC) and the recommendation to extend the mandate of the Working Group for one additional year to continue its crucial work. She supported the request by Germany for more information on the structure and working methods of the IBAC. Switzerland noted the constraints arising from zero nominal growth and supported the creation of a new Group 6 to facilitate accession by very small economies and low-income countries. She supported the request by Japan to allow further time for the Working Group to provide more concrete information on some of the proposals and for a further discussion on them at the next session of the Governing Council.

Professor IFRAH (France) welcomed the proposals by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC as well as the recommendations put forward to improve the financial and administrative tools of the Agency. France agreed with the efforts to strengthen the sustainability, predictability and flexibility of IARC's financing. He supported the requests for information as outlined by Japan and Switzerland and underscored the importance of preserving IARC's scientific capacity. Financing must be sustainable and the budget adapted to the leading role that IARC played and capable of supporting it over the longer term. France stood ready to provide assistance in the establishment of Group 6.

Ms MEHTA (Director of Administration and Finance) thanked all of the Participating States that had expressed support for sustainable financing of IARC. She thanked the members of the Working Group who had been instrumental in the progress made thus far. It was proposed that the IBAC should meet once, or possibly twice, per year before submission of the budget to the Governing Council. The meetings would be held virtually, given budget and travel constraints. The Secretariat would work closely with the members of the IBAC to organize the agenda and topics for discussion that were of interest to all Participating States. The IBAC would make recommendations for consideration by the Governing Council, but it would not be a decision-making body. For the sake of simplicity, it was proposed that a maximum of 10 Participating States should join the IBAC.

The creation of Group 6 and the adjustments to the thresholds of the existing groups had been based on the principle of zero nominal growth. The budget envelope remained the same, but the recent change in the WHO scale of assessments would considerably impact the existing grouping and the overall assessed contributions, thereby creating significant disruption in the presentation in 2027 of the budget for the 2028–2029 biennium. In the light of those changes, the Working Group had proactively considered options to create the most practical and sustainable model for the IARC budget. There were usually minor changes in each biennium, but the current changes would be exceptional, hence the efforts made to recalculate the groups. IARC had been working extensively with several Member States of WHO that had expressed a willingness to join IARC, but with a lesser contribution in view of their economic situation and size, and bearing in mind that they contributed less than 0.005% under the WHO scale of assessment. Considering the need for the Agency to be agile and flexible, it would be in its overall interest to enable the participation of new States with the creation of Group 6.

Concerning the Working Capital Fund, the creation of a General Reserve line in the budget had been proposed to ensure that funds would not be spent until they had been received. It was an accounting solution that would pre-empt risks and prevented the accrual of further debts. The idea had been favourably received by the Working Group.

Mr de POTTER (Belgium), speaking as Chair of the IARC Sustainable Financing Working Group, said that, by way of providing context to the proposed creation of Group 6 and the adjustment of the grouping thresholds, the incentive had been to ensure the least changes possible to the existing assessed contributions while still being able to adhere to the changes in the WHO scale of assessments. The purpose of creating Group 6, from a solidarity perspective, was not only to be able to increase the amount of the assessed contributions in total of the Agency, but also to give the opportunity to low and middle-income countries to contribute to the Agency, and hence to enlarge the budget.

Ms. JOLLES (United States of America) expressed appreciation for the thoughtful discussion and the efforts that the Secretariat had explained. She was concerned that, without the introduction of adjustments, 17 Participating States would see increases from 2027 and five would see decreases. With the proposed change, only one Participating State would see an increase and one would have a decrease. She would therefore not support delaying the decision until the following year as it would then be too late to avoid the disruptive change.

The CHAIRPERSON invited the Governing Council to consider the four draft resolutions in turn. Following the approval of GB/68/R5 concerning creation of the IBAC, up to 10 members of the Governing Council would be invited to join the Committee. Having ascertained the agreement of the Governing Council to establish the Committee, she called for nominations and noted that the Participating States of Brazil, China, France, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America would be members.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Establishment of the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (IBAC)" (GC/68/R5):

The Governing Council,

Having reviewed Document GC/68/8 "Report of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC – Activity Report and recommendations",

Recalling its Resolutions GC/66/R10 and GC/67/R6,

Noting the recommendations of the Working Group and the need to inform decisions and provide more detailed guidance to IARC Participating States on budgetary, financial and administrative matters,

1. ESTABLISHES the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (the "IBAC" or the "Committee"), which shall serve as an auxiliary advisory body of the Governing Council to provide guidance and make recommendations on budgetary, financial and administrative matters for consideration by the Governing Council;

2. APPROVES the proposed Terms of Reference of the Committee (annexed hereto);

3. DECIDES that, in addition to the Chairperson of the Governing Council (ex officio member), the following Participating States will be members of the Committee for a term of two years, starting from the closure of this session: Brazil, China, France, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and

4. DECIDES that, in furtherance of paragraph 7 of the Terms of Reference, the composition of the Committee will be considered again by the Governing Council at its 70th session in 2028.

ANNEX

Terms of Reference of the IARC Budget and Administration Committee (IBAC)

I. Scope

1. The IARC Budget and Administration Committee (the "IBAC" or "Committee") shall serve as an auxiliary advisory body of the IARC Governing Council, with responsibility to provide guidance and make recommendations on budgetary, financial and administrative matters for the Governing Council's consideration.

2. The Committee shall discharge its functions in accordance with the IARC Statute, Rules and Regulations, and applicable policies and procedures.

II. Function

3. The Committee shall review, discuss, provide guidance and, as appropriate, make recommendations to the Governing Council on:

- The Proposed Programme and Budget, the assessment of annual contributions of Participating States and any identified funding gaps;
- The annual financial report and audited financial statements, together with the report of the External Auditor;
- The sustainable financing of IARC and related resource mobilization efforts;
- The status of collection of assessed annual contributions, including the situation of Participating States in arrears to an extent that would justify the application of Article VIII paragraph 5 of the IARC Statute[1];
- Administrative matters, including human resources, financial management and operational policies;
- Oversight matters, including ethics, internal audit and investigation functions; and
- Any other matter referred by the Governing Council.

III. Composition and Membership

4. The Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- The Chairperson of the Governing Council who shall be a member ex-officio; and
- Up to ten (10) representatives of IARC Participating States appointed by the Governing Council – one (1) representative per Participating State, taking into account the need to ensure wide geographic representation.

5. Each member is expected to participate fully in the work of the Committee, including attending meetings and contributing actively to the discussions, deliberations and recommendations.

6. For the purpose of membership of the Committee, Participating States shall nominate their respective representatives, to the extent possible, on the basis of the range of expertise to be prioritized (budget, finance, administration, audit or related fields).

IV. Term and Rotation of Membership

7. Except for the Chairperson of the Governing Council and unless otherwise specified hereafter, members shall serve for a term of a minimum of two (2) years.

8. For the purpose of these Terms of Reference, a "year" shall be understood to mean the period between two consecutive regular sessions of the Governing Council.

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[1] IARC Statute, Article VIII §5: "A Participating State which is in arrears in the payment of its annual contribution shall have no vote in the Governing Council if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of contributions due from it for the preceding financial year."

9. To ensure continuity and preserve institutional memory:

- Considering the IBAC builds on the work of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC (established under Governing Council Resolutions GC/66/R10 and GC/67/R6), at least one-third of the initial membership of the Committee shall be composed of former members of the Working Group;

- Membership shall be staggered thereafter, such that approximately one-third of members are renewed every two years to the extent possible, with priority given to Participating States not currently represented on the Committee, while maintaining sufficient expertise and as wide a geographic representation as possible.

V. Officers

10. The Committee shall nominate from among its members:

- A Chairperson, and
- A Vice-Chairperson

11. All members shall be eligible for nomination as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson. Officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year, which may be renewed or extended by the Committee.

12. The IARC Director shall serve as ex-officio Secretary of the Committee and may delegate this function to other members of the Secretariat as deemed appropriate.

VI. Participation of other Participating States and External Experts

13. Other Participating States may attend meetings of the Committee as observers.

14. As a general principle, for the purpose of efficient and effective conduct of Committee meetings, observers are expected to make interventions, if applicable, at the Governing Council session rather than at the Committee meeting, unless invited to do so by the Chairperson. In case where the Chairperson determines that the efficient and effective conduct of the Committee meeting will not be affected in any way, the Chairperson may, as appropriate, invite observers to make interventions with respect to items on the agenda that are of particular concern or relevance to them.

15. If required under exceptional circumstances, the Chairperson may close the meeting of the Committee, or parts thereof, to observers.

16. The Committee may invite external experts or advisors, as appropriate, to provide technical input on specific agenda items.

VII. Meetings and conduct of business

17. The Committee shall:

- Hold at least one regular session annually;
- Hold a second regular session in budget years;

- Convene additional sessions, as required, at the request of the Governing Council, the Chairperson of the Committee or the Secretariat.

18. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the meeting to take place.

19. When a member's representative is not able to attend a meeting, the member may designate an alternate with relevant expertise and shall inform the Chairperson of the Committee accordingly.

20. <u>Meeting arrangements:</u>

- Meetings may be held virtually and shall be held in private;
- Meeting dates shall be communicated by the Secretariat to all Participating States at least 45 days prior to the meeting, together with the provisional agenda;
- Any IARC Participating State may propose additional agenda items, for consideration by the officers of the Committee, at least 30 days prior to the meeting;
- Documentation shall be shared no later than 21 days prior to the meeting.

21. If the Chairperson is unable to attend a meeting of the Committee, or parts thereof, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside. In their absence, members present shall elect an Acting Chairperson.

22. Members of the Committee may consult with and seek the views of other IARC Participating States, as appropriate, prior to the meeting, with a view to facilitating informed deliberations and promoting coherence in the recommendations submitted to the Governing Council.

23. The Committee shall seek to adopt its recommendations by consensus, to be submitted to the Governing Council for decision. In case of the Committee not reaching consensus, the full content of discussions and deliberations will be reported to the Governing Council for review and decision.

24. The Committee shall agree on a standardized format to prepare a summary report of discussions, deliberations and recommendations for each meeting. The summary report shall be circulated promptly by the Secretariat to all Committee members, for approval within one (1) month after the meeting.

VIII. Reporting

25. The Committee shall report on its work to the Governing Council at each regular session.

26. The Secretariat shall assist in the preparation of a consolidated annual report of the Committee, incorporating information from the approved summary reports of the Committee meetings as appropriate, for issuance as a Governing Council document.

27. The annual report of the Committee shall include:

- A summary of deliberations;
- Any advice or observations on the topics covered during the session(s);
- Recommendations for consideration and decision by the Governing Council.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Amendments to the method of assessment of contributions and the Participating States grouping system" (GC/68/R6):

The Governing Council,

Having reviewed Document GC/68/8 "Report of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC – Activity Report and recommendations",

Recalling its Resolutions GC/15/R9, GC/66/R10 and GC/67/R6,

Recognizing that the method by which contributions to the budget are assessed is a factor which will influence the decision on membership by possible new Participating States,

Reiterating the importance of preserving the criteria established by Article XII of the Statute,

Desiring that as many WHO Member States as possible which fulfil the criteria should participate in the work of the Agency,

Noting the recent changes to the WHO scale of assessments and their impact on the current structure of the annual contributions of IARC Participating States,

Considering that the current method of assessment in Resolution GC/15/R9, adopted in 1976, required amendments, as per the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC,

RESOLVES

(1) that the first 70% of the appropriations to be financed by assessments on Participating States shall be borne equally by all Participating States (the equivalent of one unit each), except Participating States in group 6 who shall contribute the equivalent of 0.5 units;

(2) that the remaining 30% shall be assessed in accordance with a unit system which takes account of national resources;

(3) that for this purpose, Participating States shall be classed in six groups according to the WHO scale of assessment, as follows:

(a) Group 1 comprises the Participating States which contribute 6% or more in the WHO scale of assessment,

(b) Group 2 comprises the Participating States which contribute 3% or more but less than 6% in the WHO scale of assessment,

(c) Group 3 comprises the Participating States which contribute 1.5% or more but less than 3% in the WHO scale of assessment,

(d) Group 4 comprises the Participating States which contribute 0.5% or more but less than 1.5% in the WHO scale of assessment,

(e) Group 5 comprises the Participating States which contribute 0.05% or more but less than 0.5% in the WHO scale of assessment;

(f) Group 6 comprises the Participating States which contribute less than 0.05% in the WHO scale of assessment;

(4) that the remaining 30% referred to in paragraph (2) above shall be divided into units which will be paid by Participating States as follows:

(a) A group 1 State shall pay 8 units,

(b) A group 2 State shall pay 4 units,

(c) A group 3 State shall pay 2 units,

(d) A group 4 State shall pay 1 unit,

(e) A group 5 State shall pay 0 unit,

(f) A group 6 State shall pay 0 unit;

And,

(5) that this method of assessment shall be effective (i) immediately so far as it relates to the contributions of new Participating States, and (ii) as from the biennium 2028–2029 for the assessment of the contributions of existing Participating States.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled “Introduction of a General Reserve mechanism for long-term arrears” (GC/68/R7):

The Governing Council,

Having reviewed Document GC/68/8 “Report of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC – Activity Report and recommendations”,

Recalling its Resolutions GC/66/R7 and GC/67/R9,

1. NOTES the recommendation of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC to introduce a General Reserve mechanism to manage the budgeting of assessed contributions from Participating States in prolonged arrears i.e. with arrears that equal or exceed the total due for the two preceding financial years, and to enhance budget realism and programme implementation;

2. DECIDES that, at the time of preparation of the proposed programme and budget to be submitted to the Governing Council for approval the following year, the assessed contributions of Participating States with prolonged arrears as described in paragraph 1 above will be transferred to the General Reserve line of the proposed budget and will not be used for the programmatic activities;

3. DECIDES that the use of any portion of a Participating State's assessed contributions transferred to this General Reserve will be subject to (i) receipt of the full amount corresponding to the Participating State's assessed contributions due for the biennium or biennia in arrears; and (ii) decision by the Governing Council on the purpose of use;
4. DECIDES that, if the Governing Council has approved a repayment schedule for a Participating State in prolonged arrears and the Participating State complies with such schedule, the assessed contributions of that Participating State may be transferred to the regular budget and used for programmatic activities;
5. RESOLVES that any portion of the budget that remains in the General Reserve at the end of a biennium will not be considered as unspent funds and thus, will not be returned to the Governing Council Special Fund (GCSF);
6. AGREES that the above General Reserve mechanism shall be effective immediately for future biennial programme and budget proposals;
7. REQUESTS the Secretariat to make all reasonable efforts to make savings in the approved Programme and Budget 2026–2027 to compensate for any prolonged arrears that, under this new guidance, would have been included in the General Reserve line, to avoid use of the Working Capital Fund for this purpose; and
RESOLVES that any unused balance of the budget falling under the above category at the end of the biennium 2026–2027 will not be returned to the Governing Council Special Fund (GCSF).

The resolution was **adopted**.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC" (GC/68/R8):

The Governing Council,
Having reviewed Document GC/68/8 "Report of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC – Activity Report and recommendations",
Recalling its Resolutions GC/66/R10 and GC/67/R6,
1. NOTES the Report (Document GC/68/8) with great interest;
2. THANKS the Working Group for their work;
3. REQUESTS the Working Group to work closely with the newly established IARC Budget and Administration Committee to ensure a proper transition; and
4. DECIDES, for the aforesaid purpose, to extend the mandate of the Working Group for an additional year with the following composition: representatives from Australia, Belgium, China, Italy, Russian Federation and the United States of America.

Ms IZAGUIRRE (Canada) said that, while Canada supported the extension of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing of IARC for another year to support the IBAC transition, Canada would not be able to continue its membership of the Working Group. She reiterated Canada’s appreciation for having had the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the important work of the Working Group and looked forward to participating as an observer at upcoming IBAC meetings.

The resolution was **adopted**.

2. STATEMENT BY THE IARC STAFF ASSOCIATION: Item 14 of the Agenda (Document GC/68/10)

Dr FOERSTER, speaking as Co-chairperson of the IARC Staff Association Committee (SAC), said that she would highlight key parts of the Committee’s report: A key focus of the current mandate had been to improve communications and build trustful relations between IARC management and personnel. She was pleased to report that considerable progress had been made in that regard through the establishment of regular meetings between SAC members and the Director, the Director of Administration and Finance, and the Human Resources Officer. She was pleased to note that the Memorandum of Understanding initiated under the former SAC had now been signed.

Among the priorities and concerns IARC colleagues had identified were the impact of the financial difficulties facing the Agency and the exercise to reprioritize scientific activities. Staff appreciated the efforts from management to communicate the realities of IARC's financial situation in a transparent manner. Nevertheless, the rollout of the reprioritization exercise and implementation of financial efficiency measures had contributed to increased anxiety, concern for the future, and diminished morale across the workforce. Notably, senior scientific positions had been abolished before the close of the previous biennium, resulting in the separation from service of four colleagues, each of whom had served the agency for many years. The SAC regretted that the departures added to the number of senior scientific positions that had been abolished in recent years and acknowledged concerns raised by colleagues that separations from service had fallen overwhelmingly on scientific positions.

While staff understood and appreciated the gravity of the financial situation, concerns about the loss of scientific capacity persisted. The SAC had raised the issues with management on several occasions. Any measures to address financial difficulties should recognize that IARC, as a research agency, required sufficient scientific expertise to deliver on its mandate. Should further cuts become necessary, an in-depth review to streamline administrative processes should be considered to potentially mitigate the impact on the scientific workforce.

Alongside the effects of IARC's financial challenges, significant distress had been experienced by personnel regarding the abolition of the former Epigenomics and Mechanisms branch. The SAC had supported colleagues concerned in group and bilateral meetings with management. The SAC regretted that certain decisions made had been taken without full consideration of the consequences for staff and their research activities. Information provided for colleagues was too frequently inaccurate, which created doubts and caused unnecessary anxiety at an already stressful time.

The SAC also wished once again to raise its concern regarding the prolonged absence of a staff physician at IARC. It had been approximately two years since a staff physician has been in post at the Agency on a regular and reliable basis. The absence had resulted in a significant backlog of periodic medical examinations, most notably affecting colleagues working in the laboratories. While the SAC noted that a solution was close to being secured, it respectfully requested that immediate measures be taken to address the existing backlog of appointments and that safeguards be put in place to prevent extended periods without a staff position in the future. The gap had coincided with a period of heightened stress and anxiety across the Agency, compounding concerns and increasing vulnerabilities among personnel. In line with discussions and resolutions from the most recent WHO Global Staff Management Council meeting, the SAC stressed that readily accessible psychological support, including but not limited to a staff physician, ombudsperson services, and a staff wellbeing counsellor, was critical during challenging times. Therefore, the SAC considered that the appointment of a staff physician and the availability of easily accessible psychological support must be treated as an absolute priority to safeguard staff mental and physical health.

The periodic Work Climate Survey was an anonymous survey open to all personnel and offered the possibility for colleagues to express their opinion on their employment conditions and working environment. For the 2026 survey, 242 responses had been received out of 429 personnel. 83% of respondents had reported that they were proud to work for IARC and 83% had indicated that their work gave them satisfaction. In general, supervisory practices at IARC were regarded as positive by colleagues. A good team spirit, particularly in smaller groups or teams, was explicitly mentioned by multiple respondents, with 70% of respondents believing that people in their team collaborated successfully.

Despite those very positive results, personnel expressed frustration that reports made about suspected misbehaviour at a supervisory level were sometimes not adequately or not promptly addressed. The results showed that 23 colleagues had reported feeling harassed in the workplace, including two potential cases of sexual harassment. Unfortunately, more than half of respondents disagreed with the statement that morale at IARC was high. Specific issues contributing to stress included contract precarity, concerns over financial instability and the growing administrative burden on scientific work. Staff had also mentioned grade and pay inequity and implicit intergenerational disparities.

With respect to work modalities, two-thirds of respondents had identified teleworking as the most relevant initiative put in place by IARC. Staff were able to benefit from up to eight teleworking days per month, with 60% of personnel teleworking for at least five days per month. The numerous benefits of flexible working arrangements included improved work-life balance, greater flexibility in working hours, reduced commuting time and decreased air pollution. Those factors contributed to improving physical and mental health, as well as social wellbeing. The SAC looked forward to future collaboration with management and with the new staff physician to consolidate flexible working arrangements.

Over the previous year, there had been a willingness for transparent communication between management and SAC, with real efforts made to improve communication with IARC personnel. However, some decisions communicated often lacked clarity, which created uncertainty and distress among personnel. Due in part to the financial situation and the implications of a possible withdrawal from IARC of the United States of America, there was growing concern regarding wellbeing at IARC. The employment of a staff physician and the easy availability of psychological support was an absolute priority for staff mental and physical health. She thanked all colleagues for their commitment and dedication and the Director and Participating States for the opportunity to address the Governing Council.

Ms JOLLES (United States of America) said that she very much appreciated the statement and thanked the Staff Association for having highlighted issues of concern. Accountability was the cornerstone of effective international governance, and the Governing Council must collectively reiterate that there was zero tolerance of staff misconduct at IARC. She particularly wished to raise the topic of misconduct by superiors, which the SAC had noted had not been address adequately or promptly. She requested further details on those matters. It would be important to include internal oversight and investigations on the agenda of the new IARC Budget and Administration Committee. Regular reporting and review of the issues was required to ensure strong policies and evidence that IARC appropriately investigated allegations of misconduct.

Ms MEHTA (Director of Administration and Finance) said that, although management had not yet seen the results of the survey, they could perhaps be shared with the Governing Council.

Dr FOERSTER, speaking as Co-chairperson of the IARC Staff Association Committee (SAC), said the results of the survey appeared to be very similar to those recorded in previous years.

Mr KAVANAGH (Head of Human Resources) thanked the Staff Association Committee for having raised the issues concerning staff wellbeing. He shared the concerns regarding the need for a staff physician and noted that the position had been difficult to cover for some 15 years given that, for funding reasons, the position had been made part-time. Some candidates had declined offers at the last minute. There was an ongoing recruitment with a solution currently awaiting approval by WHO. The position had been made open to international recruitment in order to improve the chances of filling it. IARC had worked extensively with WHO on staff wellbeing and had even gone as far as trying to encourage former staff members to return to the Agency as well as meeting with other international organizations to find ways of providing support. It was an issue that IARC considered to be a high priority.

With respect to staff misconduct, cases could be dealt with through informal and formal resolution. Informal resolution could be dealt with through the Human Resources Office, the Staff Association, medical services, the ombudsperson or a staff counsellor or staff psychologist. There was also a formal route which included WHO to resolve complex cases. Resolution could be fragmented due to the number of actors involved and there had been a focus on empowering staff to develop relationships that worked. In 2025, 15 cases had been investigated, four of which had related to one person and two cases each had been related to one person. Areas of complaint had included harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority, fraud, sexual harassment, failure to comply with professional standards, and retaliation. Concerning outcomes, six cases had been found to be unsubstantiated, four cases had been substantiated and five cases were ongoing. Five staff members were no longer employed, including some who had been dismissed. One case of sexual harassment had been found to be unsubstantiated, and one had been substantiated and was currently in the final stages of the disciplinary process. On the issue of fraud, one case had been found to be unsubstantiated and one case was ongoing. The Agency had worked to encourage staff to raise issues of abuse, including through a policy addressing abusive conduct which set out the responsibilities of staff, management, and supervisors. Appropriate professional standards, including good supervisory practices, were articulated and a charter had been introduced to highlight learning and capacity building and setting clear expectations of behaviour for supervisors, management and staff. Training had been introduced on psychological safety, first aid, conflict management, confident communication and neurodivergence. A "Working Together" series of training had been made available by the Staff Association. Briefing sessions had been introduced for early career visiting scientists. In 2025, all cases submitted through the four-stage procedure of the WHO Office of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) had been found in favour of the Agency.

The DIRECTOR thanked the members of the Staff Association for their work for the Agency and for raising awareness on issues that must be improved. She was committed to making improvements. She thanked them for their dedication, for the sincerity of their discussions and for their focus on problem solving.

3. WITHDRAWAL OF A PARTICIPATING STATE – IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF): Item 3 of the Agenda (Document GC/68/21)

The DIRECTOR said that, as indicated in Document GC/68/21, the Secretariat had received a notification of withdrawal from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretariat regretted the decision and hoped to continue its engagement with the country.

Ms MEHTA (Director of Administration and Finance) said that notification had been received from the Islamic Republic of Iran on 20 February 2026. Based on Article XIII of the IARC Statute, the notification of the intention to withdraw would take effect from 20 August 2026. The Governing Council was hereby invited to note the notification.

Ms TISCHELMAYER (Austria), participating remotely, congratulated IARC on the work accomplished as outlined in the reports presented to the meeting of the Governing Council earlier that day. Further to the announcement of the withdrawal of a Participating State, Austria could not accept that Participating States should be asked to make any additional financial contributions as a result.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Notification of withdrawal of a Participating State – Iran (Islamic Republic of)" (GC/68/R22):

> The Governing Council,
>
> Having considered document GC/68/21,
>
> 1. TAKES NOTE of the communication from Iran (Islamic Republic of) notifying its intention to withdraw from the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and further takes note that such notification shall take effect on 20 August 2026, in accordance with Rule XIII of the IARC Statute, with dues of contribution amounting to €5 406 735;
>
> 2. EXPRESSES its regret on this decision; and
>
> 3. HOPES that such withdrawal will be of a temporary nature.

The resolution was **adopted**.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS, INCLUDING REPORT ON INTEREST APPORTIONMENT: Item 24 of the Agenda (Document GC/68/18)

Ms MEHTA (Director of Administration and Finance) drew attention to Document GC/68/18 which recorded the provisional approval by the Governing Council Chair for acceptance of one grant entitled: "European guidelines and quality assurance on primary prevention of gastric cancer and third report on the status of implementation of the Council Recommendations on cancer screening" for the amount of € 2 600 000.49 for 24 months. There had been no projects in collaboration with the private sector considered for prior approval during the year. In accordance with the standing authorization provided to the Director under Resolution GC/55/R23, interest income of €21 542.53 had been apportioned to the grant entitled: "Improving Cancer Screening, Surveillance and Communication in the Gulf Region", received from the Gulf Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Saudi Arabia.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Acceptance of grants and contracts" (GC/68/R17):

The Governing Council,

Having considered Document GC/68/18 "Acceptance of grants and contracts",

In accordance with the IARC Financial Regulations,

1. CONFIRMS the provisional approval given by the Governing Council Chair between sessions, in accordance with Resolution GC/52/R13, paragraphs 2 and 3, for the following project:

> European guidelines and quality assurance on primary prevention of gastric cancer and third report on the status of implementation of the Council Recommendations on cancer screening [European Commission - EU4H], in an amount of €2 600 000.49 for 24 months]

2. NOTES the post facto reporting of grants and contracts accepted by the Director as detailed in Document GC/68/18;

3. NOTES the amounts of interest income apportioned; and

4. COMMENDS the staff on its success in winning competitive research grants.

The resolution was **adopted**.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS: Item 25 of the Agenda (Document GC/68/19)

Ms MEHTA (Director of Administration and Finance) drew attention to Document GC/68/19 which set out unconditional donations received from various donors during 2025 in the amount of €23 557.54 and which had been credited to the Special Account for Undesignated Contributions. As in the past, the Director requested that the Governing Council should provide her with a standing authorization to allocate funds from the Special Account to unfunded activities within the flagships, based on the MTS 2026–2030 and on programmatic needs.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Acceptance of donations" (GC/68/R18):

> The Governing Council,
>
> Having been informed by Document GC/68/19 of the unconditional donations accepted during the year 2025 under the authority vested in the Director by Resolution GC/4/R3,
>
> EXPRESSES its deep appreciation to the donors for their generous contribution to the research activities of the Agency.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Use of the Special Account for Undesignated Voluntary Contributions" (GC/68/R19):

> The Governing Council,
>
> Having reviewed Document GC/68/19 "Acceptance of donations",
>
> Recalling its Resolution GC/23/R6,
>
> Noting the mechanism for allocation of funds from the Special Account for Undesignated Voluntary Contributions in between its yearly sessions,
>
> 1. APPROVES a standing authorization to the Director, for the period 2026–2030, to allocate un-earmarked funds mobilized into the Special Account for Undesignated Voluntary Contributions to the unfunded activities within the Flagships, based on the Medium-Term Strategy 2026–2030 (Document GC/68/13 and Annexes); and
>
> 2. REQUESTS the Director to report to the Governing Council on the use of the Special Account for Undesignated Contributions on a yearly basis, clearly indicating funds actively mobilized and allocated to the Flagships accordingly.

The resolution was **adopted**.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE ADMISSION OF NEW PARTICIPATING STATES: Item 26 of the Agenda

The CHAIRPERSON recalled Resolution GC/53/R20 which provided that the number of members and composition of the Subcommittee on the Admission of new Participating States should be agreed at each regular session of the Governing Council. She recalled that the Subcommittee was currently composed of Brazil, Egypt, Japan, Morocco, Qatar, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Chairperson of the Governing Council. With the exception of the representative of Egypt, who was not present, she noted that the existing members of the Subcommittee confirmed their continued participation.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled “Membership of the Subcommittee on the Admission of new Participating States” (GC/68/R20):

> The Governing Council,
>
> Recalling its Resolution GC/18/R14 nominating members of the Subcommittee on the Admission of new Participating States and the requirement to nominate new members at the end of each session of the Governing Council,
>
> Recalling its Resolution GC/53/R20 deciding that the number of members and composition of the Subcommittee shall be agreed upon at each regular session of the Governing Council,
>
> DECIDES that this Subcommittee shall be composed of the Chairperson of the Governing Council (member ex officio), and representatives of Brazil, Japan, Morocco, Qatar, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, who shall hold office until the next regular session of the Council.

The resolution was **adopted**.

7. BIENNIAL REPORT ON PUBLICATION ACTIVITIES: Item 22 of the Agenda (Document GC/68/16)

Dr MÜLLER (Managing Editor, IARC Publications) said that the 2024–2025 biennium had seen continued growth in the uptake of annual subscriptions for the *WHO Classification of Tumours Online* website, which offered the full set of fifth edition volumes of the series and the first four volumes of the *IAC-IARC-WHO Cytopathology Reporting Systems* series. In 2023 there had been a shift in dominance from revenues from print sales to revenues from online subscriptions and the trend had become an established pattern. During the biennium, there had been continuing investment in interoperability with external systems, notably between the IARC publications website and the WHO title management system, BiblioLive. There had been a slight reduction in the proportion of immediately open access articles, a matter that would be monitored in the coming biennium as IARC strived towards its open science goals.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled “Biennial report on publication activities 2024–2025” (GC/68/R15):

> The Governing Council,
>
> Having reviewed Document GC/68/16 “Biennial Report on Publication Activities, 2024–2025”,
>
> 1. NOTES the Report with great interest;
>
> 2. NOTES that the net revenue to the Governing Council Special Fund from the sale of IARC publications amounted to €3 105 924 in 2024 and €3 022 597 in 2025, of which 75% was allocated in the following years respectively to the publication programme; and
>
> 3. REQUESTS the Director to continue reporting biennially on publication activities at IARC.

The CHAIRPERSON said that the amount of funds received from the sale of IARC publications was impressive: it spoke to the quantity and quality of the work that was produced by IARC.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The open part of the meeting rose at 16:20.

8. DEDICATED TIME FOR ANY MATTERS OF INTEREST OR CONCERN FOR THE GOVERNING COUNCIL: Item 15 of the Agenda

The Governing Council met in closed session from 16:20 until 17:30.

The meeting rose at 17:30.