

## **DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

1. The Scientific Council of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has the essential roles of advising the Director and the Governing Council on the Agency's scientific strategy and its implementation, and evaluating the scientific quality of the research carried out at IARC through the participation of its members in the Review Panels.
2. Dialogues with and between the two Councils is promoted through regular teleconferences between the Director and the Governing and Scientific Council Chairs and Vice-Chairs, and by the Chair's attendance of the other Council's sessions.
3. The 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the IARC Scientific Council, the first ever to be held remotely, was held from 10 to 12 February 2021. It was opened by Dr Christine Friedenreich (Scientific Council Chairperson) and was attended by the Chair (Dr Stephen Robbins, Canada) and Vice-Chair of the Governing Council (Professor Pål Richard Romundstad, Norway). The following sections of this document present a summary of the actions taken in response to the discussions and recommendations made during the 57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Council that are not addressed elsewhere on the agenda of the current Governing Council session.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

4. The Director covered IARC's research at the intersection of COVID-19 and cancer, particularly with regards to IARC's work on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on cancer prevention programmes belonging to different human development index categories.
5. The Scientific Council recommended to pursue research activities on the impact of COVID-19 on cancer services, and to further study the impact of COVID-19 on mortality from cancer, the challenge being to record cancer deaths in the background of the pandemic.
6. In response, the Director expressed her commitment to continue and to expand this area of research in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), as further emphasized by Dr Bente Mikkelsen, Director, Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO HQ, who described WHO strategic plans to respond to the pandemic at the national level.
7. The Director expressed her willingness to continue ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion in all IARC's activities.

## **DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRECTOR, THE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE AND THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ONLY**

8. The Scientific Council expressed its concerns with regards to the impact of lack of budget on the implementation of the new Medium-Term Strategy (MTS).
9. In response, the Director underlined the fact that engagement from Participating States to raise funds is critical to support IARC's mission and implementation of the MTS.
10. The Director explained that Official development assistance (ODA) can be utilized as an attractive option for contribution.
11. The Scientific Council encouraged Participating States and other stakeholders to contribute via the Core Voluntary Contribution Account (CVCA) mechanism to support IARC's mission, as well as the Nouveau Centre project.

## **UPDATE ON THE "NOUVEAU CENTRE" AND THE "NOUVEAU CENTRE" FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN**

12. The Scientific Council expressed its concern in terms of a funding shortfall. The lack of suitable premises to appropriately carry out IARC activities will severely hamper implementation of research activities planned under the MTS 2021–2025.
13. In response, the Director indicated that the Scientific Council might support the fund-raising campaign by identifying local high-net worth individuals in their home countries who may be interested in providing philanthropic support.
14. The Scientific Council supported different mechanisms proposed to support the Nouveau Centre fundraising campaign, as detailed in Document GC/63/11.

## **DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT IARC MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY (MTS) FOR 2021–2025**

15. The Scientific Council provided highly positive comments in terms of the scientific content and layout of the MTS 2021–2025. The Scientific Council congratulated the Director for creating this outstanding strategic plan that provides clear goals and objectives for the next five years.
16. The Scientific Council welcomed the increased emphasis on implementation research, indicating that impact will often depend on the local context. The Scientific Council suggested that IARC should focus on areas of potential high impact, such as cervical and breast cancer.
17. In response, the Director emphasized IARC's continuous focus on cervical and breast cancers and underlined the close and complementary cooperation between IARC and WHO towards the WHO Global Initiatives on breast cancer and cervical cancer elimination, with IARC leading implementation research.
18. The Scientific Council fully endorsed the MTS 2021–2025 as presented in [Document GC/63/6A](#).
19. The Director thanked the IARC personnel involved in the preparation of IARC's new MTS and Ms Beatrix Lahoupe who coordinated these efforts.

## **SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING POSTER REVIEW**

20. Due to the remote format of this Session, short video presentations of the IARC scientists' posters were made available on the event management platform before the meeting.
21. Specific members of the Scientific Council were assigned to report on 3–4 posters each.
22. The Chair acknowledged the significant effort of the IARC staff and trainees in terms of the work made before the meeting to prepare both the posters and video presentations. Sixty-five posters were prepared and pre-recorded. All posters received positive comments and these comments were distributed back to the IARC staff and to the Scientific Council members.
23. The Scientific Council underlined a lack of interaction between IARC staff and Scientific Council members with regards to the poster session.
24. The Director agreed and, in response, has established an informal in-house Working Group to look into ways to improve interactions between poster presenters and Scientific Council members during a remote session. The Working-Group will present its conclusions to the Director in order to improve the poster session at the 58<sup>th</sup> Scientific Council session in 2022.

## **PROPOSED PROGRAMME AND BUDGET (2022–2023)**

25. The Scientific Council observed that there has been a *de facto* decrease (zero nominal growth) in assessed contributions from Participating States for more than a decade.
26. The Scientific Council found the proposed Programme and Budget for 2022–2023 reflects the priorities set out in the IARC MTS.
27. Due to the delayed admission of the People's Republic of China as an IARC Participating State, the proposed budget has a financing gap of €3.3 million.
28. Ms Santhiprechachit presented additional information that included a request from Participating States during the Financing Dialogue to prepare an alternative Programme and Budget with no financing gap, in reference to the zero nominal growth policy in most Participating States, as reported in Document GC/63/8; as a result, the Secretariat proposed specific areas for scaling down.
29. The Scientific Council supported the areas for scaling down selected by the Secretariat, should the €3.3 million reduction need to be made, as essential to the continuing success of IARC.
30. The Scientific Council suggested to explore further opportunities to increase IARC membership.
31. In response, the Director explained that different scenarios are under discussion to increase IARC membership as part of the new Resource Mobilization strategy, noting that efforts have been somewhat hampered recently by the COVID-19 pandemic.
32. The Scientific Council suggested to explore even further the opportunities provided by engagement with WHO to increase IARC membership.
33. In response, the Director indicated that there are several criteria that need to be met for potential Participating States to join IARC that include a need to have a baseline scientific community in their country, as well as willingness to engage with IARC.

34. The Scientific Council encouraged IARC Participating States to consider making additional voluntary contributions to allow the Agency to implement its proposed Programme and recommended that the Governing Council adopt the Proposed Programme and budget 2022–2023.