



**Governing Council
Sixty-fourth Session**

**GC/64/Min.1
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Lyon and web conference, 12–13 May 2022

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING

IARC, Lyon and web conference

Thursday, 12 May 2022, at 12:05 Central European Summer Time (CEST)

Chairperson: Dr Stephen M. Robbins (Canada)

Secretary: Dr Elisabete Weiderpass, Director, IARC

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Participating State Representatives

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| Dr Stephen ROBBINS, <i>Chairperson</i> Ms Madeleine BIRD Ms Jennifer IZAGUIRRE Mr Kay SADIQ Ms Chantele SITARAM Mr Michael URGOLO Mr William WANG | Canada |
| Professor Pål Richard ROMUNDSTAD, <i>Vice-Chairperson</i> Dr Karianne SOLAAS (<i>unable to attend</i>) | Norway |
| Ms Diane STEBER BÜCHLI, <i>Rapporteur</i> | Switzerland |
| Professor Dorothy KEEFE Mr Agastya BHARADWAJ Ms Sarah MCNEILL | Australia |
| Ms Elisabeth TISCHELMAYER | Austria |
| Ms Anne SWALUË Mr Pieter VERMAERKE | Belgium |
| Dr Ana Cristina PINHO MENDES PEREIRA Dr Ronaldo CORRÊA FERREIRA DA SILVA Dr João Ricardo RODRIGUES VIEGAS | Brazil |
| Professor JIE HE Dr JING WU Dr LIN DUAN Dr XIAOCHEN YANG Dr YANG DING | China |
| Professor Anders HVIID | Denmark |
| Dr Markku TERVAHAUTA Ms Tuula HELANDER | Finland |
| Professor Norbert IFRAH Dr Jocelyne BÉRILLE Ms Christine BERLING (<i>unable to attend</i>) Mr Thomas DUBOIS | France |
| Mr Thomas IFLAND Dr Chris BRAUN | Germany |

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|---|----------------------------|
| Professor Gabriella LISZKAY Professor Péter NAGY | Hungary |
| Dr Jayanta CHAKRABARTI (<i>unable to attend</i>) Dr Tanvir KAUR Dr Rupinder SINGH DHALIWAL | India |
| <i>No Representative</i> | Iran (Islamic Republic of) |
| <i>No Representative</i> | Ireland |
| Professor Silvio BRUSAFERRO Dr Mauro BIFFONI Dr Sergio IAVICOLI | Italy |
| Dr Naoki AKAHANE Dr Masako HORITA Dr Tomohiro MATSUDA Dr Hitoshi NAKAGAMA Ms Kay OHARA Dr Tatsuya SUZUKI | Japan |
| Dr Rachid BEKKALI (<i>unable to attend</i>) Dr Loubna ABOUSSELHAM Dr Latifa BELAKHEL Ms Loubna OLOUY | Morocco |
| Dr Susan POTTING Mr Pim TEN BROEKE | Netherlands |
| Dr Al-Hareth M. AL-KHATER Dr Mohammed USSAMA AL HOMSI Dr Mohamed YASSIN | Qatar |
| Dr Sangkyun HAN Dr Jaekwan JUN Dr Taehwan SHIN Dr Chongwoo YOO | Republic of Korea |
| Dr Igor KOROBKO Dr Elena KIRSANOVA Dr Eduard SALAKHOV Dr Oleg SONIN | Russian Federation |
| Dr Elena DOMÉNECH CRUZ Dr Maria José GONZÁLEZ DE SUSO (<i>unable to attend</i>) | Spain |

Professor Madeleine DURBEEJ-HJALT
Dr Karin SCHMEKEL

Sweden

Dr Mark PALMER
Dr Mariana DELFINO-MACHIN

United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland

Dr Mara BURR
Dr Ann CHAO
Dr Krycia COWLING
Dr Sarah EMAMI
Dr Adriana GONZALEZ
Dr Satish GOPAL
Dr Dalana JOHNSON
Dr Gregory McELWAIN
Dr Marie RICCIARDONE

United States of America

World Health Organization

Ms Sigrid KRANAWETTER, Principal Legal Officer, Office of the WHO Legal Counsel

Dr Bente MIKKELSEN, Director, Noncommunicable Diseases Department, WHO headquarters

Observers

Scientific Council

Dr Manami INOUE, Incoming Chairperson, Scientific Council

Dr Janne PITKÄNIEMI, Outgoing Chairperson, Scientific Council

Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

Dr Sonali JOHNSON, Head, Knowledge, Advocacy and Policy

External Audit

Mr Krishnaraju SUBRAMANIAM, Director of External Audit (WHO), Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Secretariat

Dr E. WEIDERPASS,
Secretary
Dr T. LANDESZ

Dr M. ALMONTE
Dr P. BASU
Ms A. BERGER
Dr F. BRAY
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Dr V. CHAJES
Mr C. CHAUVET

Dr G. CLIFFORD
Dr I. CREE
Mr O. EXERTIER
Dr P. FERRARI
Ms E. FRANÇON
Dr M. GUNTER
Dr Z. HERCEG
Mr D. KAVANAGH
Dr M. KORENJAK
Dr Z. KOZLAKIDIS
Dr B. LAUBY-SECRETAN

Mr F. LOZANO
Dr V. MCCORMACK
Dr J. MCKAY
Ms C. MEHTA
Ms A. MENEGHEL
Dr S. RINALDI
Dr M. SCHUBAUER-BERIGAN
Dr J. SCHÜZ
Dr I. SOERJOMATARAM
Dr S. VIRANI
Dr J. ZAVADIL

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION: Provisional Agenda Item 1

The CHAIRPERSON welcomed participants to the Sixty-fourth session of the Governing Council, held by web conference for the third time in response to the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In particular, he welcomed Dr Janne Pitkääniemi, Outgoing Chairperson, and Dr Manami Inoue, Incoming Chairperson, of the Scientific Council; Dr Bente Mikkelsen, Director, Department of Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO headquarters; and Dr Sonali Johnson of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

The SECRETARY welcomed all participants and drew attention to her prerecorded introductory statement, available on the Governing Council website.

Dr BURR (United States of America) condemned the unjustified and unprovoked war currently being waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. WHO had recorded over 200 attacks on health-care facilities, causing great mental and physical harm to civilians, including health workers. The devastation of health infrastructure and the disruption of health services had seriously impacted cancer treatment and prevention and detection services. Her country declared its solidarity with the people of Ukraine and called upon the Russian Federation to withdraw from the country immediately.

Ms BIRD (Canada) likewise condemned the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine, in which 13 million people had been displaced from their homes and over 40 hospitals had been completely destroyed. Millions of people were no longer able to access safe and adequate health care in their own country.

Professor KEEFE (Australia) expressed her country's grave concern at the loss of life and destruction of health-care facilities caused by the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine, which constituted a gross violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

Dr AKAHANE (Japan) likewise condemned the attack on Ukraine's health care capacities and health care workers.

Professor IFRAH (France) declared his country's profound sense of solidarity with Ukraine and its people and condemned the Russian invasion, which had destroyed health-care facilities and supply lines and seriously disrupted cancer care and other medical services. He hoped that the Agency would increase its collaboration with Ukraine.

Dr KOROBKO (Russian Federation) called upon the Secretariat to ensure that the discussion was confined to scientific matters relevant to cancer and did not stray into political issues.

The SECRETARY and the CHAIRPERSON mentioned that the focus of the meeting was cancer prevention and control and that its content should remain scientific and technical.

2. ELECTION OF RAPPORTEUR: Provisional Agenda Item 2

On the proposal of Dr PALMER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Ms Steber-Büchli (Switzerland) was elected Rapporteur, the proposal being seconded by Professor DURBEEJ-HJALT (Sweden).

3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Provisional Agenda Item 3 ([Document GC/64/1 \(Prov. Rev.2\)](#))

The agenda was **adopted**.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE BIENNIAL REPORT 2020–2021: Agenda Item 4 ([Document GC/64/2](#))

In a prerecorded video statement and an [oral presentation](#), the SECRETARY introduced the IARC Biennial report 2020–2021 (document GC/64/2). The highlights of the previous biennium included the accession of China as a Participating State of the Agency; the adoption of the new Medium-Term Strategy 2021–2025; and the continued preparations for the move to the Agency’s new headquarters, the Nouveau Centre, scheduled for 2023.

Under Pillar 1 of its new scientific structure, data for action, the Agency had recorded an estimated 19.3 million new cancer cases and 10 million cancer deaths worldwide in 2020; that figure was projected to increase to 30.2 million cases and 16.3 million deaths by 2040. For the first time, breast cancer had overtaken lung cancer as the most commonly diagnosed cancer worldwide. The Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development (IARC-GICR), with its six regional hubs, had developed four e-learning modules for the new network of IARC-GICR regional trainers and the CanStaging+ tool for staging of 12 types of cancer. The project on targeting childhood cancer was intended to increase surveillance capacity for childhood cancer in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The Cancer Surveillance Branch had undertaken new research programmes on inequalities in cancer and in health economics. The Agency was a founder member of the COVID-19 and Cancer Global Monitoring Consortium, and had launched the COVID-19 and Cancer Initiative (IARC-C19) as a contribution to global recovery from the pandemic.

Under Pillar 2, understanding the causes of cancer, the IARC Biobank had amassed 6 million biological specimens from all over the world and had continued its large-scale population-based studies, including the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) study and the Japan Public Health Center-based Prospective Study (JPHC). Other activities included the flagship Mutographs Grand Challenge project, which aimed to generate mutational signatures for five different cancers across five continents, and the Rare Cancers Genomics initiative, as well as the assessment of new early detection biomarkers for cancer risk prediction.

Pillar 3, from understanding to prevention, focused on primary and secondary cancer prevention research through the World Code Against Cancer initiative, including the European Code Against Cancer and Latin American and Caribbean Code Against Cancer, and on improving breast cancer survival in LMICs through the African Breast Cancer – Disparities in Outcomes (ABC-DO) study. For the first time, IARC has demonstrated the efficacy of a single dose human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to prevent persistent infection with HPV types 16 and 18. As a result of Agency research, the United Kingdom had issued interim guidance reducing the course of vaccinations against HPV from two doses to one.

Under Pillar 4, knowledge mobilization, the Agency had published six IARC Monographs, two volumes of the IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention and three volumes of the WHO Classification of Tumours series (“Blue Books”). The year 2021 had seen the 50th anniversary of the Monographs programme, which had assessed over 1000 potential carcinogens in total. In the areas of learning and capacity-building, 253 early-career and visiting scientists from 58 countries

had worked at the Agency; 73 participants had attended the online IARC Summer School in Cancer Epidemiology in 2021; and 18 training courses and webinars had been organized for participants from LMICs.

Professor JIE HE (China) commended the impressive achievements of IARC during the biennium and the leadership shown by the Director. He described China's cancer control activities, including a cancer registry covering over one billion people and a digital platform for primary cancer prevention, which collected data on potential risk factors and predicted cancer risk.

Dr NAKAGAMA (Japan) commended the staff of the Agency on the quality of their research and their success in disseminating it to a wide audience.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "IARC Biennial Report 2020–2021" (GC/64/R1):

The Governing Council,

Having reviewed the IARC Biennial Report for 2020–2021 ([Document GC/64/2](#)),

1. EXPRESSES its satisfaction with the work accomplished; and
2. COMMENDS the Director and her staff on the Biennial Report.

The resolution was **adopted**.

5. ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO: Agenda Item 5

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL addressed the Governing Council in a prerecorded video message, noting the major threat to sustainable development and prosperity represented by cancer and the disruption of prevention and treatment services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and other current world crises. WHO and IARC were working together to combat breast cancer and childhood cancers and, for the first time, there was the possibility of complete elimination of one form of cancer – the declared aim of the WHO Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative. He looked forward to the Agency's forthcoming move to the Gerland biodistrict of Lyon to join the WHO Academy as part of the WHO Global Health Hub.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Agenda Item 6 ([Document GC/64/3](#))

The SECRETARY, illustrating her remarks with [slides](#), introduced her Director's Report (document GC/64/3), including scientific highlights of the Agency's work where they were not covered elsewhere on the agenda. Key performance indicators collected since 2020 included the number of scientific articles published, the collaborators involved and the impact of the articles: the 426 articles published in 2021 had an h-index ranking of 17, meaning that 17 articles had each been cited at least 17 times. The Agency also used the Altmetrics database, which tracked mentions in non-traditional media, including social media, Wikipedia, research blogs and public policy documents.

With the approval of the Scientific Council, she proposed to convert the IARC Senior Visiting Scientist award scheme into a number of awards of shorter duration aimed at mid-career scientists from LMICs and Participating States; the new format was considered more cost-effective and more in line with the Agency's capacity-building mission. A draft resolution on this conversion was prepared for the current session.

Turning to partnerships, she welcomed the continued complementary and synergistic partnership between IARC and WHO. The Agency's data, evidence synthesis and scientific interpretation contributed to a number of WHO global flagship projects, including the Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative, the Global Breast Cancer Initiative and the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer. A joint workplan for 2022–2023 was in preparation, covering the creation of mechanisms to improve sharing of information and knowledge on the WHO global initiatives; co-designed priority projects; and the creation of committees for implementation, joint communication and resource mobilization.

The Agency had continued to consolidate its data protection framework and data security measures over the previous year. The new data protection policy had been finalized, and a comprehensive register of records of data processing activities had been created for all scientific and non-scientific data processed at the Agency. Further measures included the appointment of a permanent data protection officer, Ms Jolien Jongerius, and a data steward network, with data stewards from each scientific branch working to connect scientific work, data governance and information technology (IT) work. IARC continued to collaborate with the European Commission, the European Data Protection Supervisor and data protection officials from its partner international organizations and scientific collaborators to find long-term solutions to data-sharing issues.

Turning to resource mobilization, she summarized recent developments. Discussions with potential new Participating States, principally Czechia, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Portugal and Saudi Arabia, were under way. Activities to increase the proportion of direct research funding allocated to the Agency included the creation of a portfolio of research projects in LMICs expressed in non-technical language and identification of potential bilateral donors; intensified contacts with major philanthropic foundations, particularly in the Middle East, and nurturing of existing relationships with non-State actor donors; and innovative fundraising activities, particularly in respect of the Nouveau Centre campaign. In 2021, the Agency had secured a total of €36.18 million in extrabudgetary funding, of which €19.04 million had been attributed directly to IARC. Fourteen major donors accounted for 93% of voluntary contributions. She commended the Agency's scientists on the record number of 245 grant applications submitted in 2021.

The Agency had introduced a simplified procedure as the default for low-risk engagement with non-State actors. The new procedure was consistent with WHO practice and with the WHO Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA). The second edition of the IARC-specific guide on engagement with non-State actors had entered into force in September 2021.

In the area of management and administration, in early 2024 the Agency would move over to the new Business Management System, which was compatible with WHO systems, more user-friendly and less reliant on error-prone manual input. An administrative transformation roadmap had been developed to strengthen scientific IT capacity and data protection.

As at 31 March 2022, the Agency had 231 staff and 142 visiting and early-career scientists; 42.5% of the staff were on professional grades and 52.9% of professional staff were women, although women accounted for only 11.1% of staff at grade P5 and above. A total of 33% of general-service staff and 25% of professional staff were funded from the regular budget.

The IARC Equity and Diversity Advisory Group had been established in 2020. Following a request from the European Commission related to grant applications, the Group had drafted the IARC Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, describing policies and action plans in that area.

The Staff Association had been dissolved in 2021 as no candidates had stood for election. Elections for a reconstituted Association were scheduled for June 2022. In the meantime, representatives of the WHO Staff Association had participated in staff selection panels.

Staff had participated actively in learning and development activities: 76% of staff had taken online courses, and 431 participants had attended 31 webinars. Staff had also participated in mandatory cybersecurity training and in mental health and psychosocial support training related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A 40-hour online course in research management and leadership skills, already available to staff, would be extended to external researchers and scientists in 2022.

In closing, she paid tribute to Dr Paul Kleihues, former Director of the Agency, who had died in March 2022. An obituary and electronic book of condolences were available on the Agency website. An associated draft resolution was before the Governing Council at the current session.

Dr MIKKELSEN (Director, Noncommunicable Diseases Department, WHO headquarters) welcomed the strong relationship between WHO and IARC. In particular, the Agency's clinical trials proving the efficacy of the one-dose regimen for HPV vaccination could potentially speed up achievement of the target of vaccination of 90% of all adolescent girls by 2030 and save millions of lives, as well as saving an estimated US\$ 2–5 billion.

Approximately 50% of WHO Member States were still reporting serious disruption of their cancer services because of the COVID-19 pandemic. IARC data had contributed to WHO policy guidance to help countries to build back better and fairer, as well as use COVID-19 recovery funding as efficiently as possible.

IARC and WHO collaborated to provide the data and policy guidance required to support governments in investing their health spending wisely. The WHO global initiatives on breast, cervical and childhood cancers were now being implemented in over 60 countries, and an enhanced data system had been introduced to monitor and report on progress.

Dr PINHO MENDES PEREIRA (Brazil), Professor IFRAH (France), Dr PALMER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Ms SWALUË (Belgium) commended the Director and her staff on their excellent work over the past year and on the Agency's close collaboration with WHO and the European Commission.

Dr BURR (United States of America) welcomed the close collaboration between WHO and IARC and the Agency's commitment to international cancer research. She encouraged the Director to continue her efforts to recruit new Participating States.

Dr LANDESZ (Director of Administration and Finance), replying to a point raised by Dr BURR (United States of America), said that IARC, WHO, the European Commission and other interested parties had held meetings two or three times every year since the adoption of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to discuss ways of sharing scientific information with entities outside the European Union. The solution might include, for instance, an amendment to the standard contractual clauses giving greater scope to international organizations; however, no changes were expected before late 2022 or early 2023. WHO had recently successfully concluded a pillar assessments on data protection by the European Commission. The Agency was developing a secure cloud-based IT platform that will allow collaborators to share scientific data virtually in the future.

Dr NAKAGAMA (Japan) drew attention to a new type of collaboration between the Agency and a Participating State, namely the participation of his country's National Cancer Center in the

Agency's Population-Based Long-Term Surveillance Team. He thanked the Agency for its support in his country's efforts to develop an Asian code against cancer.

Dr HELANDER (Finland) commended the Agency's focus on data protection and data-sharing. Close collaboration with the European Commission would be essential for the implementation of the European Union Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Legislation on data-sharing would be needed for research and development and education activities.

Responding to a point raised by Dr AKAHANE (Japan), the SECRETARY noted Japan's suggestion for a Monograph on aspartame and the need for close coordination with WHO on public communication of the outcome of any associated Monograph meeting.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Death of Dr Paul Kleihues, IARC Director Emeritus" (GC/64/R17):

The Governing Council,
Having taken note of the death of Dr Paul Kleihues, IARC Director Emeritus,
EXPRESSES its deep regret at the death of this internationally renowned researcher and its gratitude for his role in enhancing the reputation of the Agency, with major contributions to international collaboration, the consolidation of the WHO Classification of Tumours series and the initiation of the World Cancer Report series, during his directorship, from 1994 to 2003.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Director's Report" (GC/64/R2):

The Governing Council,
Having reviewed the Director's Report ([Document GC/64/3](#)),

1. THANKS the Director for the Report and for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provided therein;
2. NOTES with satisfaction the continued efforts made towards further strengthening coordination and communication between IARC and WHO;
3. THANKS the Secretariat for its report on IARC engagement under the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA) as part of the Director's Report, in accordance with [Resolution GC/60/R17](#);

Recalling its Resolution GC/54/R18 in which it authorized the Director to use the unbudgeted assessments of new Participating States towards the activities of the Agency,

4. NOTES that, in support of the IARC Medium-Term Strategy for 2021–2025, the Director will make partial use of the afore-mentioned funds in the biennium 2022–2023 to modernize IARC's administrative management system, by joining WHO's new Business Management System project, and to strengthen IARC's data protection framework and scientific data management systems. The Director will report on the use of these funds in future Director's Reports; and
5. EXPRESSES its satisfaction with the Director's written and oral Reports.

The resolution was **adopted**.

7. REPORT OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: Agenda Item 7 ([Document GC/64/4](#))

8. DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL: Agenda Item 8 ([Document GC/64/5](#))

Dr PITKÄNIEMI (Outgoing Chairperson, Scientific Council), illustrating his remarks with [slides](#), presented the report of the Fifty-eighth session of the Scientific Council, which had been held by webconference on 9–11 February 2022.

Beginning with general issues, he noted that the Scientific Council had strongly supported the measures introduced to counter the historical gender imbalance among the senior staff of the Agency and had recommended that details of the Equity and Diversity Advisory Group should be posted on the IARC public website and that checklists should be drawn up for membership of internal selection committees and IARC meetings. It strongly supported the evaluation framework and key performance indicators for the Medium-Term Strategy, and particularly appreciated the increased focus on qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation of outputs, and the inclusion of key performance indicators on gender equity and minorities. Scientific Council members could use their good offices to assist in the recruitment of new Participating States. The Scientific Council had endorsed the strategy and mode of operation of the IARC-C19 initiative, with a strong emphasis on transfer of knowledge and capacity-building for Participating States, and called upon the Governing Council to identify the resources needed for its implementation.

Following the poster review of the work of branches that had not undergone a full formal review, the Scientific Council had recommended that Branch Heads give a short overview of the general scientific activities within each Branch before the presentation of posters, and that a take-away message should be added at the end of all presentations. The talks should more specifically illustrate cross-branch structure and interdisciplinary interactions. The next poster session was scheduled for the earlier dates of 6–8 December 2022.

The Scientific Council had congratulated the Secretariat on its endeavours in education and training. It had recommended the creation of a permanent alumni network and further interaction with the WHO Academy. It had endorsed the Director's proposal to convert the 12-month Senior Visiting Scientist Award into shorter Mid-Career Visiting Scientist awards, with a flexible duration of 3–12 months and increased participation by LMICs.

Congratulating the Secretariat on its fundraising efforts for the Nouveau Centre project, the Scientific Council had asked to be supplied with a media pack so that members could assist in the fundraising campaign and had suggested the inclusion of visual elements illustrating biobanking and laboratory work.

Turning to the scientific review of the Cancer Surveillance Branch, he noted the outstanding rating awarded to the past performance and future plans of the Branch and its perfect fit with the mission of the Agency. The main recommendations included an increase in regular budget funding for the Branch's work, with full funding for IARC-GICR, and the need to find long-term solutions for data-sharing with all countries.

In the scientific review of the Environment and Lifestyle Epidemiology Branch, the past performance and future plans of the Branch had been assessed as outstanding and the relevance of its work to the mission of IARC had been assessed as a perfect fit. The main recommendations included the expansion of work currently being conducted in LMICs to other countries and a

broadening of the current focus on known and suspected carcinogens to include potentially important new causes of cancer.

Dr Manami Inoue (Japan) had been elected as the new Chairperson of the Scientific Council and Dr Luis Felipe Ribeiro Pinto as the Vice-Chairperson. The next meeting was scheduled to take place virtually on 8–10 February 2023. The review of the Nutrition and Metabolism Branch would take place virtually on 23–27 January 2023; the panel would consist of Dr Tone Bjørge (Norway), Dr Ulrike Haug (Germany) and Dr Marie-Elise Parent (Canada).

The SECRETARY drew attention to her response to the Scientific Council's recommendations, which was contained in document GC/64/5. A permanent alumni network would be a valuable innovation, but the human and financial resources required to operate it remained to be identified.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Report of the Scientific Council" (GC/64/R3):

The Governing Council,

Having reviewed the Report presented by the Fifty-eighth Scientific Council ([Document GC/64/4](#)) and the Director's response ([Document GC/64/5](#)),

1. NOTES the Report (Document GC/64/4) with great interest;
2. CONGRATULATES the members of the Scientific Council for their supportive and excellent work; and
3. COMMENDS the Director for her constructive responses to the recommendations of the Fifty-eighth Session of the Scientific Council.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Replacement of the IARC Senior Visiting Scientist Award by the IARC Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Award" (GC/64/R4):

The Governing Council,

Recalling its Resolution GC/34/R9 in which it authorized the use of the Special Account for Undesignated Contributions to bring the IARC Visiting Scientist Award to a maximum of US\$ 80 000 per year,

Having considered the proposal to convert the 12-month Senior Visiting Scientist Award into shorter Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Awards,

Noting the support from the Scientific Council in its Report ([Document GC/64/4](#), paragraphs 48–50) and the Director's response ([Document GC/64/5](#), paragraphs 23–25),

Further noting the Scientific Council's recommendation for some flexibility in the duration of the Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Awards, with an average of six months but varying from three to 12 months, depending on the specific project,

AUTHORIZES the conversion of the 12-month Senior Visiting Scientist Award into shorter Mid-Career Visiting Scientist Awards, to be funded from the Special Account for Undesignated Contributions for a maximum of €71 200 per year, as long as a sufficient balance is available in this account.

The resolution was **adopted**.

9. COVID-19 AND CANCER INITIATIVE: A BUILDING BACK BETTER PROPOSAL (IARC-C19) – REQUEST FOR SUPPORT AND FUNDING: Agenda Item 9 ([Document GC/64/6](#))

Dr BRAY (Head, Cancer Surveillance Branch), illustrating his remarks with slides, presented an update on the Agency's COVID-19 initiative. He noted that a [more detailed presentation](#) had been made available on the INDICO platform.

The containment measures necessitated by the pandemic, lasting weeks or months, had resulted in multiple secondary health impacts, including disruptions to cancer services in many Participating States. The next steps of the IARC-C19 initiative were centred on informing governments and national agencies about mitigation and recovery strategies, which would also help to ensure countries' preparedness for future crises and enable them to build back better. He noted the programme had the full endorsement of the Scientific Council, which had seen the initiative as testimony to the Agency's responsiveness.

He outlined three work streams: first, a focus on strengthening data collection systems, which included review of national and subnational policy documents to assess the impact of the control measures across the cancer continuum from prevention through to palliative care. He said there would be a specific data collection intended to better understand linkages between policies and outcomes, especially those that related to cancer. Second, to improve the health system resilience of countries and provide guidance to help them to build back better. That included creating a dynamic, evidence-based decision-making platform that would provide detailed systematic mapping of policy responses and comparative advantages. The modelling platform would be based on simulation, including scenarios that could be adapted to national contexts. Third, a knowledge dissemination and technology transfer element would allow Participating States to second staff to the Agency through dedicated fellowships.

He noted the need for a budget of US\$ 6 million over the four-year project. The Governing Council was kindly requested to support the Agency in securing two thirds of that funding, with the remaining US\$ 2 million being provided through in-kind support, such as through secondment. Voluntary contributions to support the initiative were therefore requested. In relation to governance, he explained that the aim was to establish an international advisory panel, and to ensure the participation of experts from across geographical areas that could serve as a liaison point and provide expert advice to the Agency.

Dr PALMER (United Kingdom) thanked the Secretariat for its important proposal, which enjoyed the full backing of the Scientific Council. He announced that the United Kingdom was able to contribute £500 000 of support in the form of a voluntary contribution, and expressed the hope that other Participating States would also be able to contribute.

Dr GOPAL (United States of America) expressed support for the initiative: the COVID-19 pandemic had caused unprecedented disruption of cancer screening and treatment in his country. He observed that some aspects were not unique to COVID-19 and might therefore be integrated into existing work streams. He requested further information on coordination between the initiative and the work being done by other parts of WHO, particularly the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence, as well as similar national initiatives such as those of the United States Centers for Disease Control (US CDC) and the Daffodil Centre in Australia. He said he would be pleased to review a proposal during the intersessional period.

Dr BRAY (Head, Cancer Surveillance Branch) agreed that the initiative must be a collective undertaking from the outset. He confirmed that the Agency had been working with other

institutions including the US CDC, the Daffodil Centre in Australia, and the International Cancer Screening Network (ICSN). He agreed that some aspects, such as health system resilience, applied beyond the scope of COVID-19. He noted that WHO, the Agency's parent organization, had established many relevant activities over the previous few years which would be taken into consideration.

Professor DURBEEJ-HJALT (Sweden) expressed her full support for the initiative and said that her country was exploring funding options with relevant stakeholders, such as research agencies and advisory bodies.

Ms TISCHELMAYER (Austria) welcomed the initiative and emphasized the importance of cooperating with other institutions in order to avoid duplicating similar undertakings already running nationally in several Participating States. She said she would have liked the proposal to have been more detailed.

Professor KEEFE (Australia) said her country was very interested in the initiative, as the work of the Daffodil Centre attested to. However, she was not able to make any commitment on her Government's behalf during its caretaker period.

Dr BRAY (Head, Cancer Surveillance Branch) emphasized that the goal was to complement the work being done at national level, rather than duplicate it; to innovate where that was possible; and to provide a benchmark that would allow Participating States to see what worked. He emphasized that cooperation with other institutions was in the Agency's DNA.

The CHAIRPERSON noted the strong support from many Participating States, with some, such as the United Kingdom, offering voluntary contributions, and others, such as Sweden, exploring funding sources. He proposed that a small working group be established to prepare a draft resolution.

Dr PALMER (United Kingdom) said that he would be happy to participate, but wished to clarify whether any members of the Governing Council would be opposed to a resolution that called for voluntary contributions to support the initiative.

The CHAIRPERSON said he took it that the Governing Council wished to convene a working group to draft a resolution that would include a request for voluntary contributions.

It was so agreed.

The SECRETARY, supported by Dr BRAY, said that arrangements would be made to enable the working group to meet. Dr GOPAL (United States of America) confirmed he would be happy to participate.

10. UPDATE ON THE "NOUVEAU CENTRE" AND ON RESOURCE MOBILIZATION: Agenda Item 10 ([Document GC/64/7](#))

Mr CHAUVET (Strategic Engagement and Resource Mobilization Officer) played a video depicting the interior of the Nouveau Centre that had been produced by one of the companies providing in-kind donations, mostly of furniture for the Welcome Hall of the building.

He encouraged Participating States to take up the opportunity to name one of 11 locations in the Nouveau Centre, in exchange for donations over €100 000. Locations could be named after a country, a city or a well-known cancer scientist. He remarked that the auditorium was to be named after Dr Christophe Mérieux in recognition of the latter's family long-standing relationship

with the city, and that the Princess Takamatsu name would be carried over to one of the new meeting rooms.

He expressed thanks for the incredible work done on procurement, as a result of which funding had been secured for all Priority 1 items. However, voluntary contributions were still being sought for other items, such as the laboratory equipment needed to provide an optimum working environment for the Agency's scientists.

Ms FRANÇON (Administrative Services Officer) said that she was pleased to confirm that funding had been found for all Priority 1 items.

Professor ROMUNDSTAD (Norway) said that the move to the new premises heralded the start of a new era for the Agency; Norway was happy to be able to make a voluntary contribution and would be honoured to participate in naming a part of the Nouveau Centre.

Dr McELWAIN (United States of America) said that the United States had consistently supported the concept of relocation to a new site. He thanked the City of Lyon and the region for their work to cover the increased costs and expressed appreciation for the strategy to raise funds; he looked forward to hearing future reports that the project was continuing on schedule and in budget.

Mr AKAHANE (Japan) expressed disappointment that efforts to secure the cooperation of Japanese companies had not yet born fruit, as well as appreciation that the name of Princess Takamatsu would continue to be acknowledged in the Nouveau Centre.

Professor IFRAH (France) expressed full support for the strategy for securing funding and encouraged other donors to support the Nouveau Centre.

Ms BIRD (Canada) thanked the Secretariat for the update. She thanked France for its continued commitment to the project and others, Norway included, for their generous donations. She applauded the three-pronged strategy and resource mobilization efforts and commended the continued prioritization of costs in order to allow the Nouveau Centre to open as early as possible. She congratulated the Secretariat on having fully funded Priority 1; however, the funding of Priority 2 and Priority 3 items continued to be important. She welcomed the Métropole de Lyon's generous decision to cover the additional €7.8 million in costs, but asked whether that approach posed any risk to progress on the Nouveau Centre. She encouraged the Secretariat to document and share lessons learned from the experience, particularly in relation to resource mobilization, and explore how such lessons might be used in other aspects of IARC's work in future.

Ms FRANÇON (Administrative Services Officer) replied that the Métropole de Lyon had secured the additional €7.8 million needed, and so the funding approach posed no financial risk to the operational progress of the Nouveau Centre.

Mr CHAUVET (Strategic Engagement and Resource Mobilization Officer) expressed appreciation to the French Government for its support to facilitate the Nouveau Centre at all administrative levels. Planning had started for the inauguration of the new building on 12 May 2023. Thanking Japan for its efforts to reach out to Japanese companies, he noted that Japan's active support for the crowdfunding campaign had resulted in Japan being the country with the second highest number of donors in the crowdfunding campaign. He also thanked Norway for its generous voluntary contribution. He encouraged those interested to discuss naming opportunities, which would lend concrete realization to the idea of collaboration.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Update on the "Nouveau Centre" and on resource mobilization" (GC/64/R6):

The Governing Council,

Having considered [Document GC/64/7](#) "Update on the "Nouveau Centre" and on resource mobilization",

1. EXPRESSES its appreciation to the City of Lyon, for their continued efforts and strong support throughout the challenging period preceding the move to the new building; and to the French national authorities, the Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the Métropole de Lyon, and the City of Lyon for the continued support received and progress made on the "Nouveau Centre" project;
2. EXPRESSES its appreciation to the IARC Secretariat for closely monitoring the building works and for its efforts to mobilize funds;
3. EXPRESSES its deep appreciation to the donors for their generous contributions, in cash or in kind, to the "Nouveau Centre" project;
4. ACKNOWLEDGES the remaining funding gap of €4.95 million for a fully operational, modern, smart and open building, with €0.36 million remaining to be mobilized to ensure that "Priority 1" operational equipment is purchased prior to the move to the Nouveau Centre, currently planned in the last quarter of 2022;
5. AUTHORIZES the Director to accept further donations in cash or in kind for the purpose of furnishing and equipping the Nouveau Centre, subject to and in accordance with applicable internal rules and regulations, including inter alia with regard to FENSA and partner recognition;
Recalling its [Resolution GC/60/R10](#), whereby it allowed that future miscellaneous revenue originating from the sale of old equipment and furniture during 2018–2021 and credited to the Governing Council Special Fund, be used towards the "Nouveau Centre" project,
6. DECIDES to extend the aforesaid authorization to future miscellaneous revenue originating from the sale of old equipment and furniture during the biennium 2022–2023;
7. ENCOURAGES Participating States to make voluntary contributions and provide support to the resource mobilization efforts towards the Nouveau Centre; and
8. REQUESTS the Director to report, every six months, on resource mobilization efforts and to keep the Governing Council Working Group on Infrastructure apprised of major future developments in relation to the "Nouveau Centre".

Dr LANDESZ (Director of Administration and Finance) suggested replacing the words "with €0.36 million remaining to be mobilized to ensure that "Priority 1" operational equipment is purchased" with the words "beyond Priority 1 needs" in paragraph 4, to reflect the fact that Priority 1 needs had been fully funded.

Ms BIRD (Canada) suggested that the figure in paragraph 4 be adjusted from €4.95 million to €4.59 million to reflect the updated funding gap, as Priority 1 items had now been funded.

The resolution, as amended, was **adopted**.

11. BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (OHSC), 2020-2021: Agenda Item 11 ([Document GC/64/8](#))

The CHAIRPERSON noted that the document had been made available on the INDICO platform.

Mr KORENJAK (Chairperson of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee) expressed his appreciation to the IARC administration for having provided some funds for the projects that the Committee had listed.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Biennial report of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC), 2020–2021" (GC/64/R7):

The Governing Council,

Having examined the "Biennial Report of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC), 2020–2021" as contained in [Document GC/64/8](#),

1. EXPRESSES satisfaction with the arrangements which are in place to ensure the health and safety of the Agency's personnel; and
2. REQUESTS the Director to continue reporting biennially on occupational health and safety issues at the Agency.

The resolution was **adopted**.

12. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT, REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021: Agenda Item 12 ([Document GC/64/9 Rev. 1](#))

The CHAIRPERSON recalled that the [presentation illustrating the item](#) had been made available in advance on the INDICO platform, and two Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions had been held to accommodate different time zones.

Mr SUBRAMANIAM (Director of External Audit, WHO), presenting the external auditor report for the year ended 2021, recalled that the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India had been appointed as External Auditor from 2020 to 2023. He was pleased to have been able to perform an on-site audit, which had overcome some of the challenges of the virtual format used the previous year. He had made several recommendations to improve the transparency, accuracy and completeness of financial statements and disclosures, which management had accepted and made suitable adjustments for. Based on that, an unqualified audit opinion had been issued confirming that the financial statements were fairly stated in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

Some recommendations had also been made regarding IT security and other gaps in the system. In regard to the overall financial statement, he said that revenue had remained at the same level as the previous year. The deficit had increased slightly, from about 13% to 15%, but the liquidity position remained strong: current assets were four times the liabilities. He said he wished to flag that one of the biggest liabilities was the accrued staff liabilities, which had a funding level of about 38% funded; management had indicated it expected to break even in that regard by 2040. He noted that in the year ended 2021 there had been a small actuarial gain, and so liability had come down. He thanked the management of the Agency for their cooperation.

Mr YANG (China) thanked the External Auditor for preparing such a detailed financial report and welcomed the finding that the financial statements were in accordance with international accounting standards. He said that China would continue to make its assessed contributions to IARC in future, including in the fields of finance, human resources and technology.

Ms BIRD (Canada) welcomed the unqualified opinion from the External Auditor but said she remained concerned that the Agency continued to run a deficit, which had amounted to €5.92 million for the year ended 2021. She said Canada had consistently raised its concerns about the long-term liabilities related to after-service health insurance (ASHI). Although it was good that the figure had decreased, she noted that the variation in the amount was attributable to currency fluctuations and discount rates that were outside the Agency's control. Although she understood that the long-term nature of the liabilities meant they did not need to be fully funded, she still believed that it was not a healthy financial practice for the Agency to run consecutive deficits. She noted with satisfaction that no significant issues had been identified in 2021. She noted that the identified risks and risk response actions had not changed since 2020. While she continued to welcome the efforts to identify proposed actions to mitigate or address those risks, she strongly encouraged the Director to highlight the progress made in that regard. It would be beneficial for Governing Council to be aware of the impacts made to date in advancing those actions.

Noting with satisfaction that the collection of budgeted assessed contributions at 85% was slightly higher than the previous year, she encouraged Participating States to pay their contributions on time and in full to support the financial health of the Agency and its ability to deliver on its scientific programme.

Dr LANDESZ (Director of Administration and Finance) explained that the ASHI liability was a recurring question and the situation was similar to previous years. The decision of the Global Oversight Committee had been to attempt to cover the liability fully over time. An actuary was responsible for making estimations of the amount needed, which varied year on year. Ultimately the aim was to fully cover the liability by approximately 2040. In contrast, other United Nations organizations had decided not to even attempt to cover the liability, but instead to keep it at 20% coverage; that was also considered an entirely acceptable approach. The liability did not impact the Agency's operations over the year; the Agency had healthy solvency and cashflow and its annual needs were covered by the liquidity available. He explained that long-term needs would nonetheless continue to be presented to the Governing Council as doing so was an IPSAS requirement for full transparency.

In response to the question about risks and risk responses, he said that the Agency had an IARC risk management committee, chaired by the Director and comprising the most senior members of the Agency, which met regularly and discussed the highest impact risks, both inherent and residual, and how to mitigate them. A statement summarizing internal controls and principal risks was provided annually as part of the IARC financial report. A risk-based management approach was adopted to try to keep all risks in check and implement necessary safeguards. He offered to provide more detail on any particular risk if required.

Lastly, he introduced a new member of the finance team, Ms Charu MEHTA (IARC), who said she looked forward to starting her tenure at the Agency.

The RAPPORTEUR read out the following draft resolution, entitled "Annual Financial Report, Report of the External Auditor and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021" (GC/64/R8):

The Governing Council,

Having examined [Document GC/64/9 Rev.1](#) "Annual Financial Report, Report of the External Auditor and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021 – Revision 1",

1. THANKS the External Auditor for his Report and "unqualified" audit opinion; and
2. APPROVES the Report of the Director on the financial operations of the Agency.

The resolution was **adopted**.

The meeting rose at 16:05 (CEST).