

Twenty-fourth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 27-28 October 2022

REPORT

OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

OF THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY

AGENCY

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Report of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency

1. The twenty-fourth meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was held in-person, with a hybrid format option, in Abu Dhabi on 27-28 October 2022. The meeting was attended by 17 Council Members: Algeria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, El Salvador, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe, as well as 9 alternates: China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Nigeria, Switzerland, Türkiye, Tuvalu, and United Kingdom. Also, in attendance were delegations of 67 other IRENA Members and 7 other States in Accession and other UN Member States.

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the meeting

2. The Chair of the twenty-third meeting of the Council of IRENA, Uruguay, represented by H.E. Mr Fitzgerald Cantero, National Director of Energy, opened the meeting and expressed his appreciation to the Director-General for the continued support provided to the Council. He also expressed appreciation to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as host country, for their hospitality in facilitating arrangements for the meeting.

3. On a proposal by the Chair, the Council approved the presence of the media to cover the opening of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council.

Agenda Item 2. Organisation of work

a. Election of officials

4. **The Council elected by acclamation Uruguay, represented by H.E. Mr Fitzgerald Cantero, National Director of Energy, as Chair, and Norway, represented by H.E. Mr Sten Arne Rosnes, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Norway to the United Arab Emirates, as Vice-Chair of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council.**

5. **As proposed by the Chair, Somalia was appointed as Rapporteur of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council.**

6. The Chair of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council of IRENA welcomed delegates and expressed his appreciation for their trust and collaboration to ensure a successful meeting of the Council. In noting the Latin America and the Caribbean region's strong commitment to renewable energy, the Chair expressed his conviction that IRENA should continue to lead the penetration of renewable energy worldwide. He emphasised the role of renewables in providing a solution to mitigate the lack of access to modern energy and energy poverty. He also outlined the necessity to continue working together to devise the technical support that would continue to strengthen capacities and secure funding beyond the economic indicators for developing projects. He expressed his hope for IRENA to continue leading discussions to ensure progress in the global energy transition through analysis, recommendations, and convening power that enables the sharing of national experiences and lessons learned.

7. Cautioning that the carbon energy crisis impacts the achievements obtained in the use of renewable energy and presents a challenge that leads to revised commitments on the use of renewables as an affordable resource, the Chair advised that a strong call should be made to the financial sector to continue strengthening and stimulating sustainability by ensuring the flexibility of credits, which serve as the basis of the circular economy. He provided the example of how Uruguay's investment rating has been elevated from BBB to BBB+ with a stable perspective, due to over 90% of electricity being generated from renewable energy, along with the national efforts in green hydrogen development and emissions avoidance. He mentioned other global challenges include the development of energy efficiency, the need to decarbonise economies through the transport and industry sectors, and electric mobility which he conveyed is essential to the transition until green hydrogen is in common use. The Chair emphasised the leading role of IRENA with regard to green hydrogen and the responsibility placed on Members to further strengthen this role.

8. In his opening remarks, the Director-General expressed his gratitude to the representatives of Uruguay and Norway for their continuous leadership as Chair and Vice-Chair. He welcomed participants and noted the presence of over 400 registered delegates is a testament to the importance of international cooperation in tackling the greatest challenges that the world is facing, and to the relevance of IRENA's mandate. He welcomed Papua New Guinea as the 168th Member of the global IRENA family, which shows the growth of IRENA as a platform for international cooperation, equipped with reliable and comprehensive knowledge, direct links with countries and broad partnerships

9. The Director-General pointed out the vulnerabilities of the fossil fuel-reliant system challenges the world is facing due to the turmoil in the energy sector. He stressed that countries must simultaneously react to address the issues of energy security, impacts of climate change and the shrinking timeline of realising the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He advised that renewable energy provides a multiplier solution, and that IRENA's activities provide a unique lens through which to view transition across the world. He highlighted the existence of available and cost-effective technology solutions and mentioned the falling cost of solar and wind energy in 2021, as well as the same trend across all renewables and enabling technologies. He also introduced that the renewable energy accounts for 81% of the total added energy capacity in 2021, which could reduce electricity generation cost in 2022 by at least USD 55 billion.

10. The Director-General underlined the need to consider all aspects of solutions simultaneously, not only technology, including market adaptation, targeted investment and policy frameworks, as displayed in the *World Energy Transitions Outlook* (WETO) report. He further emphasised the existence of great disparity in the pace of change and in the ability of countries to be part of shaping the energy future. He stressed that IRENA would play a critical role in changing this reality through innovative approaches and strategies.

11. The Director-General conveyed that during the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council, Members will consider a range of programmatic and institutional matters to assess progress to date and guide the next steps, including the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027. He underlined the cruciality of the current period for the development of climate agendas, and called Members' deep involvement in shaping IRENA's work and active participation in implementing its programme. He announced that combined efforts by all Members will make IRENA an engine of global energy transition, fulfilling the firm promise of leaving no one behind.

b. Adoption of the agenda (C/24/L.1)

12. The Chair introduced the Provisional Agenda (C/24/L.1) and reminded the Council that a proposal was circulated to include an item entitled ‘Proposed establishment of an IRENA Regional Office in Singapore’ under agenda item 13, ‘Any Other Business’.

13. The Council considered and adopted the Agenda, with the inclusion of the additional subject item under agenda item 13, ‘Any Other Business’.

14. After the adoption of the agenda, the Chair outlined the arrangements for interventions, as well as the technical elements for participants attending through the virtual platform. He also requested Members to adhere to the established time limit of three minutes for interventions. The Chair also informed Members that the Vice-Chair, Norway represented by H.E. Mr Sten Arne Rosnes, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Norway to the UAE, will be chairing the agenda item 7 on the Programmatic discussion on Accelerating Hydrogen – Opportunities for International Cooperation, and agenda item 8 on the Programmatic discussion on Integrating Renewable Energy into Agri-food, and Health Value Chains.

c. Adoption of the Report of the twenty-third meeting of the Council (C/23/SR/L.1)

15. The Chair introduced the draft Report of the twenty-third meeting of the Council, contained in document C/23/SR/L.1.

16. The Council considered and adopted the draft Report of the twenty-third meeting of the Council, contained in document C/23/SR/L.1.

Agenda Item 3. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (C/24/2)

17. The Director-General began his remarks by stressing that the recent developments in energy landscape have confirmed that IRENA’s mission remains both foresighted and indispensable. He observed that the rising energy costs are putting enormous pressure on the budget of individual households and national treasuries alike, while bottlenecks in supply chains are having ripple effects across the global economy. The Director-General underlined that business-as-usual is no longer an option as energy policies and investments supporting fossil fuels belong to a bygone era. He then underlined the importance of acting quickly and decisively to curb the worst effects of climate change and deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also noted that IRENA’s *World Energy Transitions Outlook* report focused on 2030, providing a practical tool for policy makers, given the pressure to deliver on development and climate commitments.

18. He underscored that a renewables-based energy transition should be at the centre of any strategy, to realise the global climate and development goals. He also indicated that with Member support, the Agency strove to make its knowledge products live through direct work with countries in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), multilateral fora, including with Germany and Indonesia as Presidents of the G7 and G20 respectively, and many other partners. The Director-General informed Members that IRENA held the first Investment Forum on Energy Transitions in Bali, Indonesia as part of the G20 agenda, and preparations were under way for the second Forum in Nigeria.

He continued that IRENA has been working directly with the Egyptian COP27 Presidency, in support of their agenda, and expected great results. He added that IRENA is also collaborating closely with UAE, the Host Country and President-designate of COP28, to use the important milestone of the first Global Stocktake as a catalyst for the shared vision of a renewables-based energy transition.

19. The Director-General extended thanks to Members for their strong participation in the Agency's work, most notably in the Collaborative Frameworks, recognising the level of time and focused engagement entailed. He also brought up examples of the impact Collaborative Frameworks have. For instance, the *Geopolitics of Energy transformation: The Hydrogen Factor* report – the first output of the Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation – has influenced the hydrogen discourse, while the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower helped shape an insightful conference held in Switzerland. He then referred to the new workstream on the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials and stressed that IRENA continues expanding work on this issue and supply chains in general. The new Clean Energy Ministerial Initiative *Transforming Solar: Supply Chains*, in collaboration with countries and the International Solar Alliance that was launched at the Clean Energy Ministerial in Pittsburgh in September 2022, is one such example where IRENA provides institutional leadership. In concluding, he welcomed ideas and feedback on how to make Collaborative Frameworks even more valuable and effective.

20. Mr Dolf Gielen, Director of the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC), referred to selected IRENA knowledge products such as the annual flagship report, costing report, scenarios for energy transition, the experience and best practices in Latin America and Caribbean report, the one on China's pathway to carbon neutrality, the innovation outlook renewable ammonia report, as well as the comprehensive trilogy report on hydrogen. On the latter topic, he added that two reports on enabling frameworks for hydrogen are currently being completed for the German G7 Presidency and three workshops have been organised. He added that a priority for the Agency is the provision and application of tools that help Members in their decision-making, such as the improved third version of the FlexTool V3 – a new power system planning tool.

21. Mr Gielen continued that IRENA has been working as a modelling partner for New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in support of the Africa's Continental Master Plan. In this context, IRENA organised the first training in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a second one in Cairo, Egypt, and the third would take place in Bonn, Germany in December. He explained that the second phase of the Central Africa Regional Model Analysis and Planning Support Programme focused on regional electricity trade, and that the first workshop was held in October 2022. Mr Gielen then stated that another priority is to facilitate networking and dialogue amongst Members. One such platform is the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials that is now fully operational and has three working groups. He reminded Members that a side event to discuss progress and next steps was going to take place on the second day of the Council meeting.

22. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi, Director of Knowledge, Policy, and Finance Centre (KPFC), reiterated that IRENA continues to expand the global body of knowledge on the enabling conditions needed for a successful energy transition. She stated that in 2022 IRENA published several reports to support policymakers in the design and implementation of policies and measures to scale up the deployment of key technologies and solutions, including policies for the sustainable use of bioenergy, green hydrogen, and energy access.

23. She stressed that IRENA's policy analysis has a comprehensive approach towards systemic transition, examining structural change and the interactions of the energy sector with the economy society and planet. Ms Ferroukhi underlined that the current crisis has further accentuated the need for such an approach. She stressed that IRENA's work had cautioned in the last years against the potential challenges of the energy transition if the appropriate policy framework was not in place and the systemic changes were not addressed. She added that this held particularly true for the power sector, which is at the heart of the transition and where misalignments between electricity, procurement, mechanism, regulations, and policies have led to many challenges. Turning to IRENA's recent *Re-organizing power systems for the transition* report, she pointed out that it highlights the need to go beyond the typical marginal fixes to the current structures and introduces systems changes in the power sector.

24. Furthermore, Ms Ferroukhi underscored the need for a people-centric transition and an enabling framework that goes beyond technical and market design questions, but also addresses social and economic aspects to ensure that some of the costly adjustments and disruptions are minimized and the benefits are widely shared. She explained that IRENA's global analysis of the socio-economic footprint of the energy transition was instrumental in shaping the narrative but was also not able to reflect some regional and country-level disparities. To address these, IRENA's modelling has now expanded to translate the energy transition pathways into socio-economic variables at the regional and national level.

25. Ms Ferroukhi highlighted the *Renewable Energy Jobs* report series, which started a decade ago and covers development in different segments of the value chain in key areas, regions and renewable energy technologies, showing the impact of different policies on the number, the types and quality of jobs created. She then referred to the recent *Solar PV: A Gender Perspective* report that shows that women represent 40% of the global solar PV workforce, which is double the share in wind and higher than the average for renewables of 32%, based on a global study undertaken a few years ago. Ms Ferroukhi highlighted that there is still a long way to achieve gender equality, but the report points to some of the policies to achieve this. She also underlined the need for a tracking system to close the skills and education gap that exists in most countries and relayed that at COP27, IRENA would launch a new global partnership with key actors in the field, such as UNESCO. She closed by stressing that as the world continues to face ongoing and new disruptions stemming from various crises, it is evident that the current energy system is not fit-for-purpose, which calls for proactively working towards systemic change to bolster economies and avoid similar levels of disruptions.

26. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Engagement and Partnerships (CEP), introduced the first Investment Forum that took place in connection with the G20 Energy Transition Ministerial and co-hosted by the Indonesian G20 Presidency. He explained that this high-level dialogue enabled an exchange to strengthen the ability of decision-makers to foster a strong enabling environment for energy transition-related investments. He relayed that the Forum brought together project developers, investors, and the financial community to effectively address project-specific risks, and that the parallel matchmaking sessions offered a platform to project stakeholders to identify finance for a project pipeline from the region. Mr Gonul mentioned that the Forum also witnessed the launch of the Alliance for Industry Decarbonization by fourteen companies, with the adoption of the Bali Declaration. He added that IRENA's recent energy transition outlooks for Southeast Asia and Indonesia informed discussions by providing a long-term perspective to energy transition aligned with net zero ambitions and associated investment needs.

27. Mr Gonul touched upon geothermal energy, an established technology in use for more than a century, with continuing technology innovation on heat applications and emerging end-use opportunities. He underlined that geothermal offers a much higher potential to become a crucial component of energy transition for climate mitigation and adaptation, fostering sustainable development. He mentioned that the second High-level conference of the Global Geothermal Alliance was convened in October 2022, hosted by the Government of El Salvador, and the International Geothermal Association. He explained that the message emerged from consultations with the Alliance was that there is scope to expand the work to promote direct use applications and inform policymakers on options to stimulate action on the ground. This would also raise awareness on the Alliance's work and adequately capture the industry's perspective. He advised that IRENA's project facilitation platforms could also help boost geothermal investments.

28. He then turned to the recent country assessments and outlooks undertaken for Bosnia Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, and Kyrgyzstan and the upcoming one for Malaysia. Discussions are also under way for assessments for Somalia, Sudan, Chad and Honduras. Mr Gonul also briefed the three recently launched cross-sectional assessments. He closed by highlighting the inaugural UN Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Partnerships Award received for IRENA's SIDS Lighthouses program, which acknowledges the Agency's response to a call for action under the S.A.M.O.A pathway and addresses SIDS' unique challenges in achieving sustainable development and implementing their commitments to the Paris Agreement.

29. Mr Ahmed Badr, Director of Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) presented IRENA's two workstreams to support the building of a robust pipeline of projects. First, he discussed the Climate Investment Platform (CIP), which to-date has reached more than 360 project applications. He added that 175 projects meet the criteria for technical assistance and facilitation support, out of which 47 have already received support, while Project Information Documents have been completed for 33 projects and 28 projects have been introduced to partners. Mr Badr highlighted that the projects represent more than 240 MW, reaching more than USD 550 million of investment and are expected to save more than 2 million CO₂-equivalent tons. Mr Badr also highlighted that during the G20 Investment Forum on Energy Transitions in Bali, IRENA attracts numerous foreign direct investors, local financiers, and local banks.

30. Turning to the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform, he extended thanks to the key supporter, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development on behalf of the Government of the UAE, for pledging USD 400 million during COP26. Mr Badr recalled that in June 2022, IRENA also signed a Letter of Intent with Masdar to join the ETAF Platform. He emphasised that IRENA is at the final stages of coming to an agreement with two multilateral development banks. He concluded by stating that the ETAF Platform's call for projects would be launched at COP27.

31. Mr Aboubacar Touré, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS), informed Members that the overall implementation rate of the IRENA core budget for 2022-2023 as of 31 August 2022 was 35%, being on schedule for the reporting period. Regarding non-assessed voluntary contributions for the year 2022, he noted that 100% of the contributions from Germany and the United Arab Emirates had been received and thanked them for their support and timely payment. He continued that USD 16.9 million of the core assessed contributions had been received, representing 75.45% of them. He then analysed the core staffing status, stating that 75 core posts had been filled, 12 are under recruitment and 6 are vacant. He stressed that the past few years have been challenging with recruitment due to the pandemic. Mr Touré highlighted that the filled positions as of 31 August 2022 are comprised of 45% women and 55% men.

32. The Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), the United States of America, represented by Ms Helaina Matza, presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 18 October 2022, contained in document C/24/CRP/1.

33. The Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC), represented by Mr Ahmed Ali, presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 19 October 2022, contained in document C/24/CRP/2/Rev.1.

34. Delegations welcomed the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023. Delegations welcomed the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023. Some delegations reiterated the vision upon which IRENA was built, to mobilize the political will and financial capital and share knowledge to accelerate the energy transition in a transparent, agile, and impactful way, and to be able to quickly respond to evolving global energy needs, while innovating in the face of challenges. A delegation underlined that the growth in membership speaks volumes of IRENAs value-added and relevance.

35. Some delegations underscored that IRENA was established as a Membership-driven agency, where Governing Body Meetings are crucial to give effective guidance in a meaningful manner. Delegations noted several areas where rapid improvement is needed. Delegations noted that several announced meetings did not materialise or were organised with short notice. To improve the governance process, it was proposed to set a calendar of events early on to allow adequate time for Members to prepare along with inviting Members to propose topics of discussions. In this context, delegations sought an update on the pending meeting of the High-level Forum on Energy Transition as well.

36. Delegations also called for IRENA to return to holding in-person meetings, especially the regional ones, to promote better Member engagement. A delegation suggested holding the PSC and AFC in-person meetings the day prior to the Council, in line with the pre-COVID practice. Several delegations emphasised the importance of document distribution in a timely manner to allow for sufficient preparations. A delegation noted that protracted discussions such as the one on tenure should be avoided and cautioned against the perception that knowledge and outcomes are limited to just few people. Another delegation requested that suggestions and decisions are shared in a non-prescriptive manner to allow for inputs from Members.

37. A delegation discussed the transition of perceptions on renewables from a niche project considered too complicated to mobilize finance and find the right suppliers to the mainstream, stressing that renewables and clean energy sources now account for more than 80% of all new energy capacity. Delegations underlined that the rapid progression in renewables deployment is partly due to IRENA's work on the topic and stressed the urgency to overcome the challenge of expanding and scaling up renewables to not lose momentum. Delegations underlined that renewable energy strategies are increasingly aligned with the narrative of climate change, an important move that has strengthened IRENA's recent work. Delegations also reiterated their commitment to work together with IRENA to promote decarbonisation and climate action.

38. Delegations highlighted IRENA's *World Energy Transitions Outlook* report that sets a clear pathway on how to achieve the energy transition and appreciated the emphasis on achieving energy access. Some delegations underlined the importance of reliable and neutral data, and objective analysis and called on IRENA to provide a concrete pathway for Member-specific, feasible and practical energy transition.

Delegations suggested linking the activities with related outcomes and achieved impact, recognising that due to limited resources, activities would have to be focused on those with the highest impact. The value added by the SDG7 Tracker in measuring progress was also noted. Some delegations noted that despite progress, investments have not reached the places of greater need, notably Africa and LDCs. Delegations called on IRENA to enhance its support to developing countries in achieving the energy transition, energy security, decarbonisation and sustainable development and referred to their national efforts in this regard.

39. Delegations discussed the current energy crisis that affects developing and developed countries, stressing securing energy supply and affordability in the short-term, while continuing to promote the energy transition, as well as energy access. Delegations also underlined the compounding effects caused by the pandemic to societies and economies. Delegations underscored that ensuring energy security and decarbonisation are vital, and IRENA has an important role to play in helping countries, drawing from its convening power, long experience and knowledge on energy transition. It was also suggested that IRENA could contextualise all reports on emerging trends around geopolitical and regional implications to help countries navigate the current crisis. Delegations discussed their strategies to increase the penetration of renewable energy in their energy mix, e-mobility and energy efficiency, and the level of ambition of targets; provide cost-effective and clean electricity; create an enabling environment for investment in clean energy; secure the supply of critical minerals, as well as promote energy storage technologies and corporate social responsibility. National energy and mining strategies were also shared, with examples of success underpinned by predictable energy markets, natural resources, and localisation to achieve energy security.

40. In informing on the preparation of their national hydrogen strategies, a number of delegations provided an overview of the partnerships established to promote green hydrogen. The potential for Africa to play a major role in the production of hydrogen was highlighted, given the continent's vast resources in renewables, for which IRENA was called on to assist with the development of a national hydrogen strategy. Some delegations noted IRENA's contribution to the German G7 Presidency on measures to support and develop global trades in green hydrogen, including in its complementarity with the EU Hydrogen Strategy for climate-neutral Europe.

41. Some delegations referred to their national strategy to decarbonise the hard-to-abate sectors and the challenges related to the cost of new technologies and grid flexibility. Delegations expressed interest in the upcoming *Innovation Landscape report for End-use Electrification* and encouraged IRENA to delve deeper into grid flexibility and system reinforcement to help accelerate the energy transition. Some delegations requested more information on IRENA's work in engaging the sectors. Delegations welcomed the Global Alliance for Industry Decarbonization, underlining the key role of solidarity and cooperation in overcoming global challenges such as climate change and energy security, and IRENA's central role in building cohesive partnerships between countries and the public and private sectors to achieve the energy transition.

42. Delegations welcomed the focus on regional issues through the Regional Energy Transition Outlooks, with some delegations highlighting their importance for shedding light on the challenges faced by SIDS. In this regard, the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative and relevant reports were underlined as important examples of IRENA's added value. A number of delegations welcomed the virtual training workshop on climate financing for SIDS in March 2022, co-hosted by IRENA and Japan, as well as the organisation of a roundtable on contract negotiation training in August 2022. Some delegations called on IRENA to provide capacity building to policymakers and regulators of Mediterranean countries and facilitate discussions at regional level to enhance interregional cooperation for the effective and efficient adoption of energy technologies.

In this regard, the 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8), held in August 2022 in Tunisia, was highlighted, including the side event to promote renewables deployment organised in partnership with IRENA as well as the launch of the African Green Growth Initiative. IRENA was also encouraged to strengthen engagement with Latin American countries to help promote long-term planning.

43. Some delegations expressed appreciation for IRENA's collaboration with other key organisations such as the International Labour Organisation on the *Renewable Energy Jobs* report. Considering the cross-cutting and nexus issues, partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Maritime Organisation will be equally important. Delegations referred to the Second High-level Conference of the Geothermal Alliance, co-organised by El Salvador, IRENA, and the International Geothermal Alliance, to increase the participation of geothermal energy in the global energy mix and increase investment in it. Some delegations requested assistance in developing domestic geothermal resources and for the Latin American region. Delegations expressed support for the Global Offshore Wind Alliance (GOWA). Some delegations also expressed appreciation for the work on Greening the Peacekeeping Operations Energy Compact, undertaken by IRENA. A number of delegations noted the Youth for Climate: Driving Ambition Initiative promoted at COP26, and the work undertaken in cooperation with IRENA, to offer young leaders the possibility to spread knowledge on the energy transition, develop skills, and raise awareness among younger generations.

44. Delegations welcomed the work of the Climate Investment Platform, and some delegations underlined the need for climate financing in Africa, Latin America and the LDCs. Several delegations called for sharing project-specific results of the CIP and the ETAF platform, once operational. Another delegation sought more information on the Renewables Accelerator Fund and when it would be launched. Some delegations welcomed the first Investment Forum in Indonesia and expressed expectation that such forum can be duplicated in other regions.

45. Delegations underlined IRENA's central role in COP27, calling on the Agency to bring more attention to the urgency of the energy transition and expressing hope that COP27 would signal an increase of investments towards LDCs. IRENA's work at the Regional Climate Weeks was also recognised. More information was sought on IRENA's strategic engagement in support of the Egyptian COP27 Presidency as well as in support of COP28. Delegations noted that COP28 to be hosted by the UAE will focus on the Global Stocktake and highlight a regional approach to overcoming climate change, stressing the opportunity presented by COP28 for IRENA to play an important role.

46. The Council took note of the progress reported on the Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 contained in C/24/2, and decided to submit it to the Assembly for consideration.

Agenda Item 4. Reports on Collaborative Frameworks

47. The Co-facilitators of the Collaborative Frameworks were invited to present oral reports on the status of the work to the Council.

Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation

48. H.E. Mr Alexander Schonfelder, Ambassador of Germany to the UAE, in his capacity as Co-facilitator, together with the UAE, reported on the work of the Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation. He informed the Council that the end-of-term is approaching for the incumbent Co-facilitators and that the Collaborative Framework will formally nominate and transition to two new Co-facilitators at their next scheduled meeting on 28 November 2022.

49. He informed Members that the Framework's activities this year focused on hydrogen following the release of the *Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation: The Hydrogen Factor* report during the twelfth session of the IRENA Assembly, in January 2022. He emphasised that the report's findings and their geopolitical implications have continued to generate considerable attention from Members and other partners alike. He added that the report's launch and the level of focus on the topic demonstrate that it was the right choice to prioritize the issue, and the quality of the analysis developed by IRENA.

50. H.E. Mr Schonfelder mentioned that in the last meeting, the Collaborative Framework discussed the upcoming priority topics and possible workstreams, explaining that while hydrogen will inevitably remain a part of the conversation, the Framework will focus on two new streams of work. He added that Members also discussed the importance of having a level of regularity in analysing the geopolitical shifts, noting that the development of a data-driven framework on indicators and trends at the nexus of geopolitics and energy transition would provide a constant in the changing energy dynamics. H.E. Mr Schonfelder underscored that IRENA, with the support of the Collaborative Framework expert community, has developed a methodology and an initial scope of content that is expected to evolve as findings emerge from the supporting datasets to be analysed. He added that while there is a separate Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition, the geopolitical aspects will remain of high interest. In this context, a deep dive on this topic, informed by technical analysis of critical materials supply chains in the context of the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials, is in preparation. He noted that more information about both projects will be shared at the next meeting of the Collaborative Framework on Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation.

51. Reflecting on the past two years as a Co-facilitator, H.E. Mr Schonfelder expressed appreciation to the UAE for being a steadfast and deeply engaged partner in these roles and to all Members, who have actively participated in the Collaborative Framework. He stressed that the diverse perspectives and insights shared have served to expand understanding of the geopolitical implications of energy transformation. He closed by wishing success and a similarly enriching experience for the incoming Co-facilitators and future impactful reports on this topic.

Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen

52. H.E. Mr Andrea Fontana, Ambassador of the European Union to the UAE and Co-facilitator, along with Morocco, reported on the work of the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen. He announced that the sixth meeting of the Collaborative Framework, which took place in October 2022 and was attended by almost 80 participants from 30 countries, focused on green hydrogen certification and emphasised it will play an essential role in the trade of hydrogen as a new global commodity.

53. He invited IRENA to continue the work on hydrogen certification to enable the creation of a functioning international hydrogen market. He relayed that the last meeting shared recent work

exchanges on the first global gap analysis of policy measures to develop international hydrogen standard and certification, as well as an assessment of the policies and strategies in G7 countries to accelerate hydrogen deployment. On the project with the German Metrology Institute (Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt - PTB) on the development of a roadmap for quality infrastructure to support hydrogen certification, H.E. Mr Fontana informed that presentations were made by PTB and other industry partners, including the International Partnership of Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy, and the Hydrogen Council.

54. H.E. Mr Fontana advised that the term of the two Co-facilitators is ending and that two new countries have been appointed – Germany and the UAE – and he wished the new Co-facilitators the best of luck in their new role. He expressed the appreciation of the European Union and Morocco, as Co-facilitators, as well as of IRENA and invited the Agency to maintain the high standard on the important topic of green hydrogen. He announced that the European Union will continue its participation in the Collaborative Framework and will support the associated work of IRENA.

Collaborative Framework on Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems

55. H.E. Mr Alvaro Ceriani, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Uruguay to the UAE, as well as Co-facilitator, together with Canada, of the Collaborative Framework on Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems, reported on the outcomes of the third meeting, held on 2 June 2022, and the fourth meeting, held on 20 October 2022.

56. He reported that the third meeting was dedicated to the energy system planning and gathered Members and key stakeholders to showcase effective approaches and strategies in the planning of energy systems with a high share of renewable energy, as well as to discuss potential challenges. He conveyed that the meeting provided a platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices on the development and use of long-term energy scenarios and various scenario planning approaches. He stated that the discussions of the meeting were supplemented by case study presentations on energy system planning with a focus on 100% renewables in France and end-use electrification in China, with the objective of accelerating a cost-effective transition in the power sector. He mentioned that the key messages from the discussions included navigating the energy transition, accompanied by the well-developed national policy based on energy system planning with a high share of renewables, is essential to the 1.5°C pathway. He further noted that carbon neutrality cannot be achieved by 2050 without significant renewable energy development, and that national energy system planning needs to be developed with attention to future uncertainties and changes.

57. H.E. Mr Ceriani reported that the fourth meeting discussed experiences of the European Union and best practices on integrated markets and regulations to facilitate the penetration of renewables and secure a stable regulatory framework that contributes to long-term investment security to achieve high shares of renewables. He elaborated that the meeting featured an interactive panel discussion on the signing and regulating of energy markets promoting high shares of renewables from the perspective of different stakeholders. He reported that IRENA presented key messages from its recent publication entitled *REorganising Power Systems for the Transition* which proposes a new power system organisational structure. He recalled that IRENA Members' experience shows that regulations governing the energy markets must adapt to the rapidly evolving needs and conditions in a timely manner. He stated that power sectors in many countries are experiencing profound changes that include low carbon technologies in the generation mix, the decentralisation of generation capacity, and an increase in regional interconnection and market

integration, consumer empowerment, as well as an increase in the availability and utilisation of biodiversity of distributed energy resources.

58. He affirmed that the Co-facilitators are pleased with the progress of work under this Collaborative Framework. As their term draws to a close, he informed Members that El Salvador and Japan are designated as Co-facilitators for the next term.

Collaborative Framework on Hydropower

59. H.E. Mr Jean-Christophe Füeg, Ambassador and Head of International Affairs of the Federal Office of Energy of Switzerland as well as Co-facilitator, together with Costa Rica, of the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower, reported that the Framework has hosted its fourth meeting in June 2022 wherein Members received an update on a number of issues, including IRENA's work on the topic and the outcomes of the International Forum on Pumped Storage Hydropower led by the International Hydropower Association. He noted that Members also had the chance to review and contribute recommendations to IRENA's forthcoming report on hydropower.

60. He stated that Switzerland and IRENA jointly convened an international conference on hydropower financing in developing countries that hold the largest untapped hydropower potential, whilst face the highest hurdles to attract investment. He mentioned that about 100 participants from governments, developers, technology providers and financial institutions from around the world attended the two-day meeting, followed by a one-day field trip, while other participants attended virtually. He further noted that the main objective of the conference was to enable interesting discussions and insights on the current challenges faced by different hydropower stakeholders and to unlock the mobilisation of the much-needed investment in developing regions. He announced that a synthesis report on the conference will be published. He thanked Members and IRENA for their support, and expressed his hope for similar initiatives in the future.

61. H.E. Mr Füeg announced also that at the next Collaborative Framework meeting, scheduled for 6 December 2022, Members will be updated on the outcomes on the International Conference on Hydropower Financing in Developing Countries, and new Cofacilitators for the next cycle will be selected. He invited all interested Members to submit expression of interest to the Secretariat by 5 November 2022. He extended an invitation to Members to participate in the proceedings by joining the Collaborative Framework. He expressed his gratitude to IRENA for planning activities and coordinating the Framework.

Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables

62. On behalf of H.E. Mr Akau'ola, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Tonga to the UAE as well as Co-facilitator, together with Italy, of the Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables, Mr Sione Sonata Tupou, Minister-Counsellor of the Embassy of Tonga reported the work conducted under this Collaborative Framework. He noted that in recognition of the vast energy potential of ocean to catalyse the global energy transition efforts, the Collaborative Framework's primary focus is to facilitate in-depth discussions and exchange of best practices on the deployment of offshore renewables, including offshore wind, ocean energy, and floating PV solution amongst IRENA Members.

63. Mr Tupou further reported that the Collaborative Framework held four meetings with high participation from Members and stakeholders. He recapped that the first three meetings held during 2020 to 2021 adopted the Terms of Reference and modalities that govern the activities of

the Collaborative Framework, nominated Tonga and Italy to facilitate the discussions of the Collaborative Framework and provided substantive inputs from Members to IRENA's G20 report entitled *Offshore Renewables: An Action Agenda for Deployment* published in 2021.

64. He mentioned the output from the Collaborative Framework served as the impetus for the establishment of the Global Offshore Wind Alliance (GOWA), an initiative funded by IRENA together with Denmark and the Global Wind Energy Council, and saddled with the ambition to create a global driving force for the uptake of offshore wind through political mobilisation and the creation of a global community of practice. He affirmed the fourth meeting, held on 24 June 2022, was attended by 56 representatives from 32 Members and States in Accession, wherein presentations were made on the best practice in implementing enabling frameworks to accelerate the deployment of offshore renewables globally, along with discussions and interventions by Members. In the support of offshore project development and deployment, Mr Tupou advised that the Collaborative Framework noted that countries are investing heavily in conducting intensive readiness assessment plans to ensure all economic, social, and environment safeguards are analysed, and relevant considerations are reflected.

65. He announced that in response to Members' request, IRENA together with the Global Wind Energy Council and Ocean Energy Europe, prepared two briefs on how to facilitate permitting processes for offshore wind and how investment could be scaled up for ocean energy solution. He also stated that the drafts for the two briefs will be submitted for final consideration of the Collaborative Framework at its fifth meeting, scheduled to take place on 1 November 2022, after which the inputs and comments from members will be incorporated in the final draft expected by the first quarter of 2023.

66. He further reported that, on 19 September 2022, a relaunch of the GOWA initiative was organised by Denmark, IRENA, and the Global Wind Energy Council on the side-line of the 2022 Climate Week in New York and announced that the formal launch of the GOWA will take place at COP27. Mr Tupou encouraged Members to follow this event owing to the intrinsic synergies between the Global Offshore Wind Alliance and the Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables.

67. Mr Tupou expressed appreciation to Italy as Co-facilitator and to the Director-General of IRENA for enabling the platform to exchange knowledge and experience. In light of the approaching end-of-term of the incumbent Co-facilitators, he invited interested Members to contact the Secretariat to express their interest in serving as the Co-facilitators for the next term. He

Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition

68. Ms Mahek Mehta, Head of Clean Energy and Advanced Economies, Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy of the United Kingdom, and Co-facilitator, together with Peru, of the Collaborative Framework, relayed that the Collaborative Framework was established in March 2022 in response to a request from Members at the twenty-third Council meeting. She reported that the Collaborative Framework aims to offer a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange, increase transparency, best practices, and coordinate actions to address issues around critical minerals to sustain the energy transition. She elaborated that the issues are grouped under three working groups: observatory for critical materials and minerals that focuses on data collection, de-risking critical materials and mineral supply, and environmental, social, and corporate governance for critical minerals and materials supply, particularly *-vis-à-vis* mining. She reported that all three

working groups met over the past several months to discuss priority areas for the next 12 months. She informed the Council that the outcome of these discussions will be presented during the side-event taking place at the margins of the Council on 28 October 2022.

69. Ms Mehta mentioned the two reports that IRENA are presently compiling - one report focuses on the EV battery critical material supply chain, and the other, a joint effort with the World Bank, which delves into the sustainable critical material supply in Southern Africa. She further announced that IRENA has also launched a series of public webinars to enhance understanding of various topics with invited guests under the critical materials umbrella and so far covered topics of rare earth elements, deep sea mining and lithium, with other topics in the pipeline. She stated that IRENA's work has been developed in collaboration with other national and international organisations, as well as the private sector to seek complementarities, avoid overlap, and leverage expertise. She noted that the voluntary contribution received by IRENA from Norway has allowed the pursuit of further activities under this Collaborative Framework to develop a validated tiered list of critical materials for the energy transition, and has also allowed the Collaborative Framework to map supply chain transparency and analyse measures for market stability. She reported that work on this Collaborative Framework will be developed through close cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, and she announced that there are more such collaborations in the pipeline.

70. Ms Mehta expressed her appreciation to Peru as Co-facilitator for its support in steering the Collaborative Framework, and she acknowledged the support received from IRENA. She thanked Members for their active involvement and invited those not yet involved to actively participate and benefit from the unique platform to lead international dialogue and ensure collaboration with all relevant stakeholders on key issues relevant to securing the supply of critical materials to sustain an energy transition.

71. Delegations expressed their gratitude to the Co-facilitators of Collaborative Frameworks and noted the activities and progress under each Collaborative Framework. They also thanked the Secretariat for its support of the Collaborative Frameworks. Delegations welcomed the contributions from stakeholders and the private sector and requested that IRENA finalises the preparation and commences procedures to activate the Collaborative Framework on Oil and Gas Sectors and the Energy Transition, as agreed during the twelfth session of the Assembly. Delegations requested that IRENA shares an advanced schedule and supporting documentation with the Membership to ensure active contribution and full participation at the meetings of the Collaborative Frameworks. In this regard, delegations also requested a more structured planning of meetings to allow for adequate preparation and representation.

72. Highlighting the growing interest in the area of critical minerals, some delegations stressed the need for increased transparency across the supply chain of critical materials, as well as strengthened Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) components, including human rights of mining workers, which in turn would encourage greater government attention and investment. The incoming Co-facilitators of the Collaborative Framework on Enhancing the Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems expressed their dedication to contribute to the facilitation of peer-to-peer collaboration and knowledge exchange on key aspects of the energy transition.

73. In reference to the Collaborative Frameworks on Green Hydrogen and Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation, delegations highlighted that the expansion of international trade of hydrogen also encompasses the need for innovative technologies for shipping carriers as well as pipelines, and for cost reduction. In this regard, delegations requested IRENA to include in future

analysis the international promotion demonstration project related to the transport of liquified hydrogen, on which some Members are presently cooperating.

74. Some delegations stated the need to extend knowledge sharing on the topics under discussion, from experts working in these areas to national administrations, to ensure that the value of IRENA's work is realised in national policies. Some delegations also suggested that the work of IRENA, including the Collaborative Frameworks, be expanded and enhanced to reach more Members, as this would ensure a relevant benefit to the Agency and its Membership. In this regard, delegations highlighted the key role of the Collaborative Frameworks in bringing Members together, presenting opportunities to rise to the challenges associated with the need to accelerate their energy transitions, facilitating peer-to-peer exchange and fostering the achievement of concrete results.

75. The Director-General reaffirmed that IRENA attributes strong importance on the Collaborative Frameworks. He advised that the Secretariat would aim to communicate to Members for expressions of interest for the associated Co-facilitator role(s) in the future. He also acknowledged the request for improvement on the process of a timely schedule of meetings and documentation. The Director-General further sought feedback from Members on whether a more formal process to organize the Collaborative Frameworks would be preferred and suggested to explore shifting the format of Collaborative Frameworks from a general format to a more contextualised discussion with additional focus on regional and country aspects or a focus on a specific year, in order to increase the effectiveness.

76. The Council took note of the reports on Collaborative Frameworks.

Agenda Item 5. Member Experiences on the Energy Transition

77. Delegations acknowledged the inextricable link between the energy transition and climate change and emphasised that the current energy crisis has accentuated the need to reduce emissions and develop a new renewable global energy system, while balancing short and long-term priorities. A delegation also underscored that the crisis is exposing the vulnerabilities of fossil-based energy systems, highlighting that energy security and the green energy transition are connected. Delegations underlined the need for increased cooperation between countries on all aspects collaboration between government and industry, civil society, the voice of the youth and suggested IRENA's central role in supporting these discussions. Some delegations also underlined that the acceleration of a just, inclusive, and equitable energy transition should be countries' priority, to ensure energy security, efficiency, and climate justice.

78. Delegations elaborated on the introduction of measures to increase the share of renewables in power generation, efforts to increase grid uptake of renewables and improve grid flexibility, the adoption of a net zero target with respective deadlines, the creation of an enabling environment for investments in renewables, as well as plans to phase out coal power and decarbonize the hard-to-abate sectors.

79. Some delegations underlined the role of solar energy in the energy transition, due to its long history of use and significant drop in costs, as well as in shaping the geopolitics of energy. A number of delegations elaborated on their national schemes to promote the uptake of solar energy, solar pumps, and clean cooking. Some delegations called for a more strategic focus on solar energy, especially on mobilising investments, and called on IRENA to assist SIDS in maintaining battery

banks and solar panels replacement, particularly for major parts, due to high maintenance costs caused by the corrosive island environment.

80. Some delegations reiterated the commitment to scale up the production of renewable energy from offshore wind by, among others, strengthening the domestic regulatory capacity and participating in various Collaborative Frameworks. Delegations also noted the establishment of the Global Offshore Wind Alliance, to accelerate the global uptake of offshore wind, to be officially launched at COP27.

81. A number of delegations emphasised the potential for green hydrogen to accelerate the path to decarbonisation, especially for the transport sector, and referred to their national hydrogen strategies and expected benefits to their domestic economies and energy systems. Delegations congratulated IRENA for its work on green hydrogen and pointed out the need to ensure that hydrogen does not ultimately overtake the consumption of renewables.

82. Some delegations emphasised the significance of hydropower in the energy supply and expressed appreciation to the Government of Switzerland and IRENA for hosting the International Hydropower Conference in October 2022. Some delegations highlighted the benefits of geothermal energy to national economic development, as well as the crucial role of sufficiently trained personnel to realise the energy transition on the ground, for which IRENA's work on employment issues continues to provide support. Delegations elaborated on their strategies to diversify fossil fuel imports, improve energy efficiency, and ensure energy security, highlighting the relevance of resource security laws in building a resilient supply chain for critical materials.

83. Some delegations stressed the limited availability of financing and technology transfer to developing countries in support of their energy transitions and reiterated their efforts and commitment to assist them, while also urging complementary international financial resources and technologies. A number of delegations also highlighted the need to support renewables investment in large coal-emitting developing countries, with efforts in this regard including the establishment of a national Climate Investment Fund.

84. A number of delegations highlighted upcoming events that could be of interest to Members, including the second edition of the International Forum of E-Mobility in Punta del Este in November 2022, the next edition of the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue to be held at the end of March 2023, and the International Off-Grid Renewable Energy Conference (IOREC) in Madrid, Spain in February 2023.

85. Delegations underlined the role of multilateral cooperation and stakeholder participation in the development of national strategies and reiterated their commitment to work with IRENA and partners to tackle common challenges, stressing the need for public-private partnerships and engagement with civil society. In this regard, delegations expressed appreciation for IRENA's efforts to engage diverse partners, and encouraged IRENA to proactively enhance such collaboration.

86. The Deputy Director-General, Ms Gauri Singh, thanked Members for the informative discussion and advised that such discussions aid the understanding of both what is happening on the ground and the direction that IRENA's work should take in the future.

87. The Council took note of the interventions from Members.

Agenda Item 6. Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2027 - Report of the Director-General (C/24/3)

88. The Director-General extended thanks to all Members, who participated in the process of developing the Strategy as well as Denmark and Kenya for their work as Co-facilitators of the MTS Working Team. He explained that, starting some 18 months ago, it has been an instructive and insightful process. The Co-facilitators regularly convened and ably steered the discussions, leading to a document that captures the nuances of diverse views and voices. He stressed that the conversations demonstrated IRENA's global reach, wide range of drivers, abilities, priorities and needs. He also pointed out at the common thread - renewable energy, which is a vital solution to the multiple challenges policy makers face today.

89. The Director-General stated that the global energy landscape has dramatically evolved since the adoption of the current Medium-term Strategy as the role of renewables in enabling sustainable development, supporting climate action, and promoting energy security is now a headline topic. He stressed that although renewables have permanently moved from niche to mainstream, by the time the next MTS cycle comes to an end, the world will have a clear indication whether SDG7 and a climate-safe future will remain within reach. He underlined that the strategic direction of the new MTS will determine the Agency's contribution to these global efforts and define its ability to provide consequential service to all Members.

90. He highlighted that IRENA was created as a trailblazer, with a forward-looking, positive mandate to help countries make the best of the possibilities that renewables offer and has pushed the boundaries by pioneering new approaches to energy transitions. He reminded Members that IRENA's first roadmap on doubling the share of renewables by 2030 was considered revolutionary in 2013, yet today, net-zero strategies are widespread, and renewables are the backbone of such plans. The Director-General added that IRENA started tracking jobs in 2012, long before the focus on just transition emerged and country support tools seamlessly fed into the NDC work.

91. The Director-General underlined that the coming five years will require urgent and targeted action, unparalleled international cooperation and continuous innovation and IRENA must be ever more agile, practical, and anticipatory to support its global Membership in navigating the path ahead. He also stressed the need to continue this trend in the next strategic cycle, and always stay a step ahead in thinking and actions, to continue supporting the Membership, competently and diligently. Echoing Members, he noted that the current MTS still includes many elements that remain valid. Building on these, the new MTS would bring an added focus on several areas including systemic changes in energy and beyond, on access, equality and the interaction between renewables and energy security and resilience. He stressed that this would be underpinned by a 360° approach to programme implementation, so that activities are mutually reinforcing.

92. In concluding, he reflected on the essential enablers of the MTS such as sustainable and predictable resource base, which is a starting point together with the Renewables Acceleration Fund. The Director-General emphasised the important role of attracting, developing, and retaining highly qualified staff, which is essential to the Agency's success. He stated that the coming period will be complex, especially given the lean core staff component and with this in mind, the Agency will take a comprehensive approach to its workforce planning and development to ensure not only effective programme delivery, but also the long-term stability of the Agency.

93. Ms Elizabeth Press, Director, Planning and Programme Support (PPS), outlined the features of the new Medium-term Strategy and noted that the mission statement has been amended to

reflect feedback provided in the previous Council in May 2022 and last MTS Working Team meeting. She explained that this version includes important elements such as a specific focus on climate change, access, human welfare, and energy security. Turning to the pillar structure, Ms Press pointed out that drawing from Members' guidance, this version has five instead of six pillars by removing the one on institutional aspects. She continued that the strategic objectives have also been refined to provide more nuance. Therefore, the centre of excellence remains the backbone to IRENA's analytical work and a primary objective in the MTS, followed by the pillar on international collaboration, which had increasingly arisen in discussions. She continued that there is a pillar with a dedicated focus on renewables in the narrow sense and on renewables deployment. Then, there is a pillar concentrating on further support for regions and countries and the last pillar on project facilitation and capital mobilisation, with emphasis on developing countries.

94. Ms Press also referred to the newly introduced Theory of Change, upon Members' request. She explained that the Theory of Change integrates the MTS objectives to show how IRENA's activities feed into them, the sphere of IRENA's control and accountability, and the desired outcomes under the umbrella of systemic change. The latter touches upon the technical infrastructure side and all elements that go beyond the energy system, leading towards the 1.5°C objective for people, planet, and prosperity as per the 2030 Agenda. In concluding, she noted that the Theory highlights the enablers that will help IRENA deliver, ranging from active member engagement through the partnerships with the broader society and energy community and beyond as well as internal elements normally contained in institutional aspects.

95. Ms Helaina Matza, Director of Energy Transformation at the Department of State, USA and Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee started her report by expressing her appreciation to Algeria as Vice-Chair of the PSC, as well as the PSC members and IRENA Members that engaged in the discussions and provided feedback. She relayed the Committee's appreciation to the two co-facilitators of MTS Working Team, Denmark and Kenya, for guiding the work over the last year and a half.

96. She noted that the Committee also welcomed the current draft, which provides clear strategic direction to IRENA on how to remain a preeminent, normative voice on renewables, considering the changing energy landscape and the multitude of actors entering the energy space. She added that the PSC expressed support for the proposed mission statement and the focus on systemic and nexus issues, while suggesting some adjustment to the language. She mentioned that a participant welcomed the vision presented in the IRENA Theory of Change, suggesting an explicit alignment with the mission statement, while another commended IRENA for developing high-quality knowledge products and encouraged the Agency to deepen its research on the economics of energy transition. Ms Matza highlighted the call for greater strategic emphasis on the emerging argument of renewable energy, secure energy, and the benefits of fully renewable systems

97. Ms Matza continued that the Committee underlined the importance of efficient collaboration with a broad range of actors to draw from their experience and knowledge, while recognizing the value of the collaborative frameworks in harnessing broad knowledge and experience from Members and others. The focus on pillar four on supporting regions and countries, and particular focus on the LDCs, SIDS, and African countries was well received, and there was a call for further strengthening cross-border energy systems and markets. She mentioned that the PSC welcomed the pillar on facilitating projects and mobilising capital and underscored the urgency to focus on markets facing difficulties in attracting investment and to deepen collaboration with all financing partners. She closed by stating that the PSC welcomed the proposal to broaden IRENA resource base through the Renewable Accelerator Fund, emphasising the importance of stable funding sources and efficient resource allocation.

98. H.E. Mr Kariuki Mugwe, Ambassador of Kenya to the UAE and co-facilitator of the MTS Working Team noted that the successful process of deliberations on the MTS has led to a concrete strategic document presenting the vision and pathway for IRENA for the next five years. He explained that the MTS Working Team was formed in 2021 and consisted of 21 Members. He noted that in the last eighteen months, the Memberships has had numerous opportunities to exchange on the topics of strategic relevance for the Agency and provide inputs. He continued that they were first invited by the IRENA Secretariat to submit written inputs in the spring of 2021 on the elements they deemed to remain valid, on key topics of work they wished IRENA would explore as well as on the areas in need of refocusing. H.E. Mr Mugwe added that the Working Team held four meetings in total, namely on 8 September 2021, 23 March 2022, 11 May 2022 and 14 September 2022, to gather Members' thoughts and feedback. He introduced that Members could also address the issue at the Council and Assembly meetings and at informal meetings.

99. H.E. Mr Mugwe then reported on the MTS Working Team's last meeting that took place on 14 September 2022, that prior to the meeting, the Secretariat had shared a draft strategy, informed by the discussions thus far, and outlining a revised mission statement and pillar structure and objectives. He stated that at the meeting, Members reflected on how best to position the Agency at the centre of the global conversation on energy transitions, considering the evolving energy landscape. He then shared some of the key messages including that the MTS Working Team underlined the importance of ensuring the MTS to allow IRENA's work to remain flexible, considering the changing energy landscape.

100. He added that the MTS Working Team welcomed the proposed mission statement and made suggestions on the language to further streamline and refine it, to strengthen IRENA's role as a leader in the energy transition. The importance of ensuring energy access and energy security, and achieving short-term goals, while remaining committed to long-term goals received wide support. H.E. Mr Mugwe relayed that amendments to the pillar structure were overall welcome, while the Team proposed re-introducing the language on shaping the global discourse than providing thought leadership as it is stronger. The focus on multilateral cooperation, especially during the current times of increasing fragmentation, under pillar four on International Collaboration and Network Hub was well received. The Team agreed that the addition of a pillar on efficient and agile institution was not necessary and called for its deletion.

101. Looking back into the last one-and-a-half year, H.E. Mr Mugwe shared lessons learned from co-facilitating this process. He stressed that from the start, the meetings of the Working Team were guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity to inspire active engagement and buy-in. He underlined his hope that this trend should continue and that even more Members, from all regions, should participate in IRENA processes to ensure that an even wider variety of views and perspectives are heard. He highlighted that this is the only way to ensure IRENA remains at the forefront of the energy transition and continues to support Members and provide tailor-made technical assistance. In concluding, he thanked Members for their involvement in shaping this important strategic document and stressed that it was a pleasure to serve as co-facilitator and help guide the process.

102. H.E. Mr Bjørn Hansen, Ambassador of Denmark to the UAE and co-facilitator of the MTS Working Team, underlined the significance of the MTS for the Agency and of developing a forward-thinking strategic document to guide IRENA's work. Outlining the process of developing the MTS, he explained that initially the IRENA Secretariat presented Members with a Note outlining the circumstances under which the current MTS was adopted as well as how the global

energy landscape has changed in the period since then. The Note also included guiding questions to help shape the discussions. He pointed out that a general orientation of the topics that Members wished to consider further emerged from the meeting. He continued that drawing from Members' discussions and insights, as well as the written inputs provided, the Secretariat consolidated the areas of consensus and developed a draft Framework followed by the draft Strategy. H.E. Mr Hansen stated that this constituted a working document that presented an updated mission statement and a revised pillar structure, which was amended after each meeting, reflecting on Members comments.

103. H.E. Mr Hansen then outlined some of the key elements that emerged from the discussions throughout, when considering IRENA's positioning in the global energy landscape as a leader of the energy transition and a driver of the real-life change. He stated that there was a consensus that the current MTS remains relevant to Members in many aspects, but there was still scope to make it more robust and give it vitality and agility to reflect the changing global dynamics. He emphasised that IRENA's position as a centre of excellence and a source of high-quality, timely analytical and empirical output was considered essential and noted that this aspect had to remain steadfast while also expanding the work to include regional approaches, to better address gaps and identify opportunities.

104. H.E. Mr Hansen further stressed that multilateralism lies at the centre of any successful strategy at all levels, thus, enhancing ties with partners and exploring new avenues of collaboration was considered important. IRENA's convening power and offer of collaboration platforms to Members should make sure they help achieve this. He also pointed out the MTS Working Team's consensus that IRENA should continue engaging with various partners to draw on their expertise, while avoiding duplication of work or overlap with other organisations. He mentioned that safeguarding IRENA's role as a global voice on renewables is of immense importance and ensuring that this trusted voice is heard among the many others that are entering the field was deemed critical. He relayed that the MTS Working Team stressed that the success of the energy transition would depend on geopolitical issues, energy security, and the economic development of countries too.

105. H.E. Mr Hansen added that ensuring that national, regional, and global perspectives are taken into consideration was called to be at the heart of the Strategy, which led to the expansion of the fourth pillar to include support to regions. Furthermore, the addition of a fifth pillar on project facilitation and finance mobilisation, to maximise impact was also widely supported, and the MTS Working Team acknowledged that IRENA had a role to play in this field. Lastly, he communicated that the MTS Working Team also discussed how to enable IRENA's delivery through a stable resource base, recognising the need for an arsenal of resource mobilisation strategies and methods. He concluded his remarks by stressing that as the process is coming to an end, it is apparent that the outcome of deliberations is a foresighted strategy that will help IRENA not only stay the course but become stronger and more impactful.

106. Delegations thanked the Director-General and the Secretariat for preparing the draft Medium-term Strategy and expressed their appreciation to Denmark and Kenya for their leadership of the MTS Working Team and for the inclusive way the meetings were conducted. Some delegations invited suggestions on how to best leverage Council meetings to advance strategic goals and add substantive deliberations to the Council agenda. Another delegation called for the timely submission of the next iteration of the MTS in preparation for the Assembly.

107. Delegations emphasised the importance of a balanced MTS to shape the Agency's strategic direction and fortify its position at the centre of the global conversation on energy transition, while ensuring that IRENA remains relevant to all Members. Delegations noted that the draft strategy is indeed a well-balanced document and welcomed the retaining of the elements of the current MTS that remain valid. Some delegations called for the new Strategy to ensure IRENA is practical and agile to best support Members in deploying renewables according to their needs and respective situations. Some delegations stressed the need to promote synergies and avoid duplication of efforts with other organisations. Further clarification on the prioritisation among the objectives in terms of budget was also requested.

108. Some delegations suggested that the MTS should recognise that both the increased share of renewables and natural gas can help attain energy and climate goals, with others emphasising IRENA's role in shaping the global clean hydrogen markets and promoting dialogue on international standards. Some delegations welcomed the language on the need to implement systemic changes holistically to help build more a predictable, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable global energy system. Delegations also welcomed the language on affordability of energy, energy efficiency and the role of investments, which are critical elements for developing countries.

109. Referring to the current crisis in Ukraine and increased energy prices, delegations stressed the urgency to switch to renewables and ensure that efforts to tackle climate change are not derailed. In this regard, some delegations expressed hope that the MTS would also support the implementation of the negotiated and non-negotiated outcomes of COP 26, stressing that solving the energy and climate crisis are not mutually exclusive goals. Some delegations emphasised the importance of ensuring access to technology and innovation for a cost-effective energy transition. A number of delegations stressed the importance of securing energy storage capacity to avoid energy shortages, as well as of green hydrogen and water desalination, and the promotion of small- and medium-size renewables projects.

110. Delegations expressed support for the refinement of IRENA's mission statement to reflect the current changing energy landscape, stressing the need to ensure that the mission statement remains relevant for the next five years by reflecting both the imperative to strongly accelerate the energy transition in the short-term, and to have long-term plans. Several delegations supported the proposed mission statement and the reference to the renewed sense of urgency for a just and inclusive energy transition, to energy security, access and affordability. Some delegations called for references to short-term objectives to 2030, showing the Agency's ambition in fighting climate change and achieving the 1.5°C goal and climate neutrality.

111. Regarding the Center of Excellence for the Energy Transition pillar, some delegations highlighted that IRENA is well placed to continue to be the leading global authority on renewable energy and the clean energy transition, and noted that Members' guidance should be the primary framework for the Agency's work. Delegations supported the strategic pillar on Global Voice of Renewables, and underlined the need to go beyond the call for renewables, considering the issue has entered the mainstream. They also emphasised the need to reach all audiences, stressing that renewables are a strategic investment in resiliency, energy security and socio-economic prosperity. Delegations welcomed the focus of the Support for Regions and Countries pillar, with a suggestion on the addition of language stressing the need for efforts to identify practical mechanisms to accelerate transitions tailored to respective circumstance and regional context.

112. Some delegations called for a special focus on Africa and that Regional Energy Transition Outlooks (RETOs) should consider regional commitments such as the African Union 2063

Agenda. Some delegations reiterated their commitment to decarbonisation and called on the new MTS to continue supporting SIDS. Delegations welcomed IRENA's analytical inputs and discussed areas of work that IRENA should continue engaging in, with analyses at the country, regional and sub-regional levels. Other key issues highlighted include hydrogen, ammonia, renewables, the achievement of universal access to energy, clean cooking, system flexibility, securing human resources for the energy transition, and how to achieve people-centric renewables deployment. The issue of achieving energy security was also suggested for inclusion under this pillar.

113. Some delegations underlined the need for IRENA to work closely with Members and relevant regional organisations operating in the energy sphere. Acknowledging that the current global challenges accentuate the need for global cooperation to solve them, delegations underlined the important role of the Collaborative Frameworks, especially on Green Hydrogen and on Critical Materials. In this regard, delegations called for the Collaborative Frameworks to be featured prominently in the MTS, with a suggestion for inclusion under the International Collaboration Network Hub pillar. Delegations welcomed the addition of the Facilitating Projects and Mobilising Capital pillar and cautioned IRENA to ensure that resources are not disproportionately dedicated to this pillar as the Agency's focus should be knowledge analysis and dissemination. Delegations welcomed the CIP and called for having the supported projects presented at a meeting or in a publication. Some delegations underlined the need to engage private sector developers and financial players, including financing institutions and funds. Delegations also stressed the need to ensure capital flows to the countries and regions most in need, such as Africa.

114. The Council considered and took note of the Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2027 - Report of the Director-General as contained in C/24/3 and agreed to submit it to the Assembly for its consideration at the thirteenth session.

Agenda Item 7. Programmatic discussion on Accelerating Hydrogen – Opportunities for International Cooperation (C/24/BN/1)

115. The Director-General noted the tremendous number of activities on hydrogen since IRENA began delving into the topic in 2018. He mentioned the time has come to collaborate closer with Members, partners and industry to accelerate the production, delivery, and use of green hydrogen through the Collaborate Framework on Green Hydrogen as well as other Collaborative Frameworks. He outlined the other global initiatives that IRENA is involved with and reiterated that the Agency remains ready to assist Members to increase the deployment of green hydrogen more effectively to contribute to emission reduction.

116. Mr Dolf Gielen, Director of the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC), provided an overview of IRENA's work under the hydrogen agenda since the last Council meeting in May 2022. He noted that the continuous growth in attention towards hydrogen reflects the imminent need for closer collaboration to accelerate the development of green hydrogen as a key pillar of the energy transition. He referred to the associated work by IRENA on the publications such as the report *Geopolitics of the Energy Transition: The Hydrogen Factor*, and the trilogy *Global Hydrogen Trade to Meet the 1.5°C Climate Goal*, as well as various policy reports including the Breakthrough Agenda Report and the G7 Hydrogen Action Pact scoping and report, *Accelerating hydrogen deployment in the G7: Recommendations for the Hydrogen Action Pact*. He reminded Members that the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen met in early October 2022 and discussed hydrogen certification and the need for quality infrastructure, and that works have been done on enabling measures roadmaps with the World Economic Forum. He informed the Council that many documents were

prepared and are available on the newly revamped IRENA website. He also mentioned that 135 countries have developed or implemented National Hydrogen Strategies, covering 80% of the world's population, showing momentum for this topic.

117. He highlighted long-term trade of hydrogen as one aspect deserving attention through international collaboration, and which IRENA has completed an analysis. He reported that in the *Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation: The Hydrogen Factor*, analysis showed that around a quarter of all hydrogen is expected to be traded across border, by pipeline and ship, which requires critical elements such as enabling framework, standards, and certification systems, as well as the infrastructure. He reported that IRENA, together with the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the High-Level Climate Champions, prepared a report for the Breakthrough Agenda Coalition that explored enabling frameworks for a number of key sectorial transitions, including the hydrogen economy. He stated that several priority actions were identified, including setting quotas for low-carbon hydrogen, establishing a common methodology for calculating greenhouse gas emissions, and alignment of priorities on end use applications. He added that a timeline to implement them was also developed. He stressed various financial institutions will launch new financing initiatives at COP 27 and G20 meetings in response to the de-risking that demands security and financing become a top priority.

118. He stated that IRENA presently collaborates on 23 international initiatives around hydrogen and highlighted the importance of ensuring consistency and synergy between the various activities. He reported that IRENA worked with the Rocky Mountain Institute to perform a gap analysis on hydrogen certification around the world, with the International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy (IPHE) on standards development, and with the World Economic Forum to develop Enabling Measures Roadmaps for Green Hydrogen for Members.

119. Mr Gielen elaborated on the findings that standards and certifications are widely seen as a critical and urgent component to facilitate international trade and announced that IRENA prepared an inventory of existing standards and certifications for the German G7 Presidency. He mentioned that eight voluntary schemes and five mandatory schemes were identified, with more in preparation and explained that most of the schemes on standards and certifications are national, and they have different focuses, thresholds, boundaries, as well as different certification instruments, designs, and methodologies for greenhouse gas emission assessment. He summarised that to have a deep global market all schemes need to be harmonised using different approaches and listed the requirements that can be achieved through timely collective ambition and joint measures, such as global hydrogen diplomacy which needs to focus on emission reductions. He mentioned there is a need to develop a common set of characteristics and methodologies to enable trade of hydrogen as a new commodity. He also noted the need to share a common platform for experiences such as regulatory sandboxes for hydrogen hubs or valleys, a need for a common methodology to measure greenhouse gas emissions along the supply chain, a need for common quality infrastructure guidance for national bodies, and a further need to support decarbonisation in potential export countries through alignment of hydrogen certification. He highlighted that there is a role for the IRENA Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen to become the global platform to enable sharing in full the lessons learned as well as further collaboration on this important topic.

120. He reported that work started in May 2022 to support the G7 Hydrogen Action Pact, as the G7 countries are expected to represent approximately 28% of global hydrogen demand. He reminded Members that the goal of the Hydrogen Action Pact is to accelerate development of low carbon and renewable hydrogen and Power-to-X value chains at domestic and global scale, with

an emphasis on how to decarbonise sectors. Mr Gielen introduced that the report of the recommendations made by IRENA to the G7 countries will be released at COP27 and further mentioned that the Agency assisted in developing recommendations on how to operationalise the Hydrogen Action Pact. He explained that recommendations focused on the need to align certification to share lessons learned, also focussed on the need to balance focus on supply and demand, as well as to promote industrial uptake. He added the recommendations also focussed on the need to conduct outreach on the priority areas for hydrogen in hard to decarbonise sectors, to clarify industry expectations, and to collaborate not only among the G7 countries but also with the Global South and potential exporting nations. As part of the Accelerating Clean Hydrogen Initiative in 2021, he stated that IRENA worked with the World Economic Forum to produce the enabling measure roadmaps for green hydrogen that were deployed at the end of last year for COP26, for the EU and for Japan, and which is currently being deployed also for China — for which ideas will be launched in Davos meeting early in 2023 — with the intention to deploy further afield in MENA, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and India. He stated that the roadmap explores six key challenges in a national or regional context, namely cost, standards and certification, demand, infrastructure, pace of deployment, and technology, and formulated enabling actions on how to overcome them.

121. He announced that the Clean Hydrogen Project Accelerator will be discussed in an IRENA event at COP27 and presented at the World Economic Forum in January 2023. He underlined the urgency of the focus on financing, noting that the Hydrogen Council recently concluded there is more than 500 hydrogen projects under development, worth USD 240 billion of investments, from which only 10% have reached a final investment decision. On the timeline of IRENA hydrogen activities, he invited Members to attend the Hydrogen Day to be hosted at the COP27 on the 16 November 2022 and notified Members that another workshop for G7 to ignite the implementation of recommendations phase of the Hydrogen Action Plan will be organised in due course. He also informed Members that IRENA will meet with the new co-facilitators of the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen to plan the next topics and activities, and that will also continue to progress the Agency's work with the German Metrology Institute (PTB) on quality infrastructure. He expressed IRENA's eagerness to assist the Japanese G7 Presidency next year as well as the India G20 Presidency as hydrogen topics will be on the agenda.

122. Delegations expressed their appreciation to IRENA on placing the topic of hydrogen on the agenda in light of the many recommendations contained in the G7 report *Accelerating hydrogen deployment in the G7: Recommendations for the Hydrogen Action Pact* and the webinars that shaped G7/G20 on green hydrogen. Delegations outlined their national efforts on hydrogen and perspectives on national government policies. Delegations highlighted that the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen, as well as the recent reports series on trade, along with the assessment of the status of policy and international cooperation create an ideal facilitation platform for the provision of IRENA support and partnership opportunities because of the crucial element of policy coordination and technology cooperation between countries to develop and activate a clean hydrogen ecosystem. Delegations stressed the need for international collaboration and cooperation to succeed with developing hydrogen as an efficient tool to mitigate climate change and also stressed the importance for the international community to work together to develop relevant standards at the outset that include the voice of all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

123. Delegations encouraged the Secretariat to continue its excellent work and its leadership on standards and certification and to further analyse global hydrogen and electrolyser supply chains. Some delegations outlined their efforts in this regard, including through national development of a coherent value chain for hydrogen, in parallel to distribution and usage developments.

Delegations highlighted the gap analysis of global hydrogen certification, which demands a common understanding on the meaning behind the terminology ‘low carbon hydrogen’ and ‘clean renewable hydrogen’, and further underlined the need for clarification on the definition of what is considered ‘green’. Delegations noted that IRENA is the ideal platform for open, transparent, systematic, and inclusive discussions on certification criteria for green hydrogen.

124. A number of delegations mentioned that the much-needed harmonisation and international certification of green hydrogen should have a compatibility of sustainability criterion, reiterating that IRENA plays a fundamental role in collecting global information on policy costs, business models, and disseminating the results through accessible reports, seminars, and workshops. IRENA’s Guide on Hydrogen was also cited as an invaluable resource in building their national hydrogen strategies. In this regard, it was suggested that the programmatic activities of the WETO are implemented separately, in coordination with Members.

125. Delegations noted the infancy of green hydrogen and the need for progress to reduce the price of low carbon and green hydrogen compared to fossil-based equivalents. In view of this, it was suggested that IRENA also considers the balancing act between supply and demand in its work. Delegations highlighted the need to accelerate and strengthen joint action to kickstart the global hydrogen economy, to enlarge cooperation in the hydrogen sector, and also to support developing countries in their net zero goals. It was stressed that the intention of the G7 Hydrogen Action Pact was not to create another additional institutional structure, but rather to coordinate the work already undertaken in different initiatives on global value chains, and to facilitate a regulatory framework for international trade in low carbon green hydrogen. Underlining that a legislative framework must establish consistent roles, responsibilities, and definitions of regulatory principles for the hydrogen market, delegations also underlined the need for a regulatory framework on ownership and operation of hydrogen infrastructure, and clarity on cost recovery, including for retrofitting and repurposing, which would facilitate broad benefits through the sharing of information and best practices. In referring to IRENA’s analysis on International Hydrogen Trade, a number of delegations proposed the development of a dynamic global atlas of hydrogen production, potential, and demand forecast in the various sectors. Five priority areas for immediate action were highlighted by delegations: strengthening international cooperation; demand creation; standards and certification; research and innovation; and financial and technical assistance.

126. Several delegations encouraged IRENA to continue its work on green hydrogen, including further analysis on sustainability criteria to ensure that green hydrogen and its derivatives are produced from renewable energy sources. The development of electrolyzers, water source purification, hydrogen storage and transport technologies as well as the distribution and transmission of hydrogen were mentioned as key to the realisation of establishing high scale solar and wind energy power plants for direct hydrogen production. The need to decarbonise hard-to-abate sectors through the essential decarbonisation of hydrogen was also mentioned, along with its role in providing economic opportunities.

127. The Director-General thanked Members for the discussion and suggestions for future work on the regulative framework and gap analysis, insights, life cycle on hydrogen, collaborative efforts, processes to support countries in setting their strategies, sustainable criteria, lifecycle approaches. Mr Gielen acknowledged the work being actioned at national level on the dynamic field of green hydrogen acceleration and emphasised the general recognition on the benefits of closer cooperation, on which IRENA can play an important role. He noted the support of the work by the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen on the exchange of best practices and observed

the encouragement to deepen work on the international harmonisation of standards and certification. He noted the interest for the provision of up-to-date data on cost and technology status and outlook, the role of hydrogen to decarbonise various sectors, and the need to mobilise financing to accelerate project development.

128. **The Council considered and took note of the presentation and subsequent discussion.**

Agenda Item 8. Programmatic discussion on Integrating Renewable Energy into Agri-food and Health Value Chains (C/24/BN/2)

129. In his introductory remarks, the Director-General acknowledged the increasing awareness on the nexus between climate, energy, agri-food, and health systems. He noted the nexus is placed high on the international agenda due to the current global food and energy crisis, COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing climate emergencies. He confirmed that despite the access to electricity being acknowledged as fundamental, there are approximately 1 billion people served by healthcare facilities without access to electricity and for which the renewable energy solution presents a key opportunity. He further noted that in 2021 almost 12% of the global population faced food insecurity at severe levels. He emphasised that the agri-food systems consume about a third of the world's energy and that energy related activity constitutes approximately a third of emissions from food systems. He stated that renewables can meet growing energy needs of agri-food systems while also advancing energy and food security, job creation, gender equality, climate resilience and adaptation.

130. The Director-General affirmed that IRENA continues to support Members through various initiatives to maximise the benefits of renewables as they seek to accelerate plans to meet their development and climate objectives. He outlined the initiatives include advances in cross-sector applications that offer benefits across all SDGs, as well as the design of holistic policies that link deployment with industrial policies, education, training, and collaboration with governments to gain a better understanding and estimate of the socioeconomic footprint of energy transition ambitions.

131. The Director-General highlighted that COP 27 will bring governments, business, and civil society to commit to a more ambitious climate action under the Paris Agreement against the backdrop of the global energy and food crisis. He underlined that a joint approach to the Energy Transition, Health, and Food Systems transformation is essential to meet current and future needs in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable manner and is also essential to secure a just energy transition to meet the Paris Agreement goals. He stated that a strong political will is necessary to drive the global transition and transformation.

132. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi, Director of Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre recalled that IRENA has explored the linkages between renewable energy and other sectors since its inception. In noting that energy touches each aspect of the economy, society and environment, she highlighted the importance to consider the footprint of the transition on various other sectors, including agriculture, water and health in order to maximise the benefits and mitigate potential risks. She referred to IRENA's analytical work on the topic which has now been expanded to conduct assessments, address data and statistical gaps, analyse specific technology applications, and to strengthen project facilitation and investment in renewable energy applications across those sectors. She conveyed that the two key nexus issues being focused on for this agenda item are the energy food and the energy health nexus. She emphasised that the agricultural sector supports the livelihood of over 2.5 billion people worldwide, and noted that growth in agriculture is estimated

to be nearly three times as effective in reducing poverty as other sectors, and access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy is an important enabler of development. She emphasised the importance of energy as a crucial input to improve productivity and yields, reduce drought, enable value addition and to raise incomes, particularly those of small-hold farmers. She noted that additionally it is needed to advance clean cooking and strengthen resilience to climate impacts.

133. Ms Ferroukhi mentioned that renewable energy solutions are well positioned to meet diverse energy needs in the agricultural sector in a distributed, cost effective, and environmentally sustainable manner with significant socioeconomic benefits. She elaborated that food systems in many developing countries face a significant lack of modern energy and a strong dependence on fossil fuels in the global food system results in vulnerabilities to supply and price shocks, as well as the obvious climate change impacts. She stated that renewables can play also a crucial role in bridging the energy access deficit faced by healthcare facilities that inhibits the delivery of quality care and that the severity of big number of people that are served by health facilities without reliable electricity access. She also highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the importance of building resilience and decentralised health infrastructure, and that energy is a crucial input to achieve that goal.

134. She noted that the scale-up on the adoption of renewables across sectors requires an enabling ecosystem that is built around key pillars that include dedicated policies, tailored financing for end users and enterprises, knowledge innovation, training, and capacity building, and also building market linkages for products and services. She affirmed that IRENA is working closely with partners, including the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and SELCO Foundation, to analyse the experience of countries and programmes to create the right enabling conditions. Ms Ferroukhi highlighted that the knowledge work of IRENA and action-oriented partnerships are delivering solutions that facilitate investments and also strengthen the enabling ecosystem at the regional and national levels for nexus projects.

135. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Engagement and Partnerships (CEP) provided a summary of IRENA's expanding country engagement work along the health and agri-food sectors which aligns to responses due to pressure on the health and food systems resulting from COVID-19 and the geopolitical crisis. He noted that IRENA's main objective is to act as the hub to provide sustainable, efficient and affordable solutions. He mentioned the importance of engaging with the ecosystem by designing tailored solutions with the stakeholders as off-the-shelf solutions don't often work and added that the extra importance to ensure these tailored solutions develop within that ecosystem can be translated into project proposals and have the potential to develop financing schemes that are affordable for the recipient.

136. He referred to the focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia where IRENA is engaged on specific initiatives in some countries. He presented two pilot projects, one in Burkina Faso on the health sector and the other in Hindu Kush Himalaya region which focuses on agri-food. He announced that the Agency is engaged with regional organisations such as the ICIMOD in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, and SACREE in Southern Africa, in an attempt to capture the regional and country specific knowledge. On the topic of healthcare, he introduced the work done Burkina Faso and that the healthcare systems suffer with 800 healthcare clinics out of 2,400 not operating because of lack of access to electricity. He mentioned that it would take approximately USD 10 million of investment to electrify the 800 healthcare facilities and explained that the government is trying to upgrade and provide solutions to those facilities that do not have electricity access, whilst also attempting to expand the infrastructure across the country and with additional clinics. He elaborated that the solutions developed are applicable to either new or existing infrastructure and

cautioned that system cost and design are extremely important because the under-sizing or oversizing of the system will result in failure of the project if the energy needs are not optimised. He noted the importance to include energy efficient equipment and appliance.

137. On the Pilot project in Burkina Faso, he mentioned that the three regions have different climate zones that require an adjustment to the building design to optimise the energy needs. He mentioned that the IT needs and estimated unit costs also have to be considered for the necessary teleconsultations for which three different options exist depending on the level of services required. He reiterated the importance of the ecosystem sector and stated that the report contains guidelines for design and installation with options for ownership and maintenance monitoring as well as training. On the pilot project in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, Mr Gonul described the work undertaken in the agri-food sector whereby the Agency identified four cash crops of importance to the region (potatoes, buckwheat, yucca, and vegetables) for which data on the ground was collected by ICIMOD, that allowed the Agency to assess the viability of renewable energy sources based on the needs and ways solutions can be plugged in. He stated that in addition to investing in renewables, modern automation of existing traditional implementation and also enterprise development support to enable proper market functionality is needed. He underlined the need for better access to the market and the evolution of the related supply chains to allow the development of a decent pipeline of projects and the development of related financing schemes to implement it. Mr Gonul affirmed the Agency attempts to stimulate action on the ground on the use of geothermal for the agri-food sector and announced that three associated publications are available to Members.

138. Delegations shared national efforts to integrate renewable energy into agri-food and health value chains, some of the challenges faced in the implementation of programmes as well as opportunities, such as the use of heat from geothermal sources for the dehydration of fruits and drying of coffees. The challenges presented by the supply-demand gap was noted as requiring the exploration of alternative methods of supply to remote areas with access to health systems, with the increased frequency of droughts accelerating the need to adopt smart agriculture with a focus on irrigation to ensure food security. Some delegations mentioned the encouraging uptake of renewable technologies in commercial farming communities with solar ground-mounted systems, and the use of solar drying in food preservation. A number of delegations shared their national targets, including an ambitious target for universal electricity access by 2030 through enhanced generation, transmission, and countrywide distribution of affordable and sustainable electricity. In this regard, an example of innovative financing that includes results-based financing and pay-as-you-go programmes was provided. Some delegations referred to the informative Spatial Analysis and suggested that IRENA could further contribute to Members' initiatives to enhance their undertakings through capacity building and renewable energy in the area of food-health nexus initiatives, as well as facilitating bench markings on photovoltaic success for renewable energy, food-health projects, development of tailored policy, technology, financing, modern solutions, technical assistance and advising government, and lost-cost stakeholders on bridging the gaps and understanding the needs, and creating market linkages.

139. Some delegations showcased energy efficient, economically viable livelihood applications presenting a myriad of solutions, including biomass-powered coal storage, climate-controlled vertical farming systems, irrigation pumps, silk and cotton textiles, fishing and agriculture plants, aerators, and multipurpose food orders. Activities aiming at facilitating the development of an ecosystem for sustainable livelihoods through targeted efforts were also highlighted, with several aims: to enable a market-oriented ecosystem to attract private sector investment; provide easy access to end-user finance by linking them to existing financing schemes or through new innovative financial instruments; to create and implement quality control standards, benchmarks,

and a strong monitoring and evaluation framework; to promote skill development to strengthen service infrastructure at local level; and to encourage innovation and research and development on efficient and cost-effective Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) livelihood applications. The promotion of the transition to sustainable food systems through established national strategies was also highlighted.

140. Delegations suggested that policymaking should focus on transforming the agri-food and health system to promote changes in offer and demand, through the exploration of different intelligent tactics in the value chain that are less energy-intensive. On the integration of agri-energy systems, it was noted that, aside from wind and solar, it is also possible to include combined biomass production and emission into agri-food systems, with a suggestion for IRENA's future work to complement the discussions with further information on the forms of integrated production of biomass and other agricultural crops, whilst also incorporating IRENA's study on bioenergy. IRENA's support for a pilot project to bridge the energy sector to the individual sectors of education and agriculture was also acknowledged.

141. The Deputy Director-General recognised Members' emphasis on the important role of IRENA to enable further engagement with ministries, such as agriculture and health, that would move decentralised applications forward and assist Members to create a more holistic policy environment. In recognition of the focus on solar and wind, she suggested the need to also take into account the use of bioenergy resources to meet energy needs and thanked the Walloon Region for the voluntary contribution that has made this work possible and allowed IRENA to step into the area of adaptation. In light of the approaching COP 27, she stated that in addition to the increased focus on mitigation, there should be more focus on adaptation as an area that requires financing.

142. She expressed the hope that IRENA will continue to be the centre of excellence that can build Members' practical experience and best practises into a platform for knowledge and experience sharing. She noted the interest of agri-based economies in cost effective solar systems for the irrigation of cash crops and food processing, highlighted that the available financial models allow development in the private sector enterprise and further noted the need for skill development at local level to maintain systems She thanked Members for their feedback and suggestions on how IRENA can focus efforts and expand this area of work.

143. The Council considered and took note of the presentations and subsequent discussion.

Agenda Item 9. Programmatic discussion on Enabling Frameworks for the Energy Transition in Higher-Risk Environments (C/24/BN/3)

144. In her introductory remarks, the Deputy Director-General referred to the WETO which indicated that the pathway to achieving the 1.5°C target requires a tripling of global annual renewable capacity additions in the next 8 years from the current 260 GW to 860 GW, for which investment is urgently required, in addition to policies to overcome the obstacles due to existing and perceived risks. She mentioned that the report *Renewable Energy Market Analysis: Africa and its Regions* published in 2022 shows that risks in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa related to policy, regulation, contract enforcement, currency exchange, and grid and transmission, and the risks continue to hinder the development of new projects. She also mentioned the supply chain disruptions and increasing cost of financing, labour, materials, and equipment being witnessed in

other parts of the world where the renewable energy sector is more developed. She noted the focus of renewable energy policy on reducing prices has resulted in the concentration of supply chains in a few countries. The Deputy Director-General referred to the vulnerability of the current model given the disruptions caused by COVID-19 restrictions and trade issues, as well as the impacts on the supply of key components and equipment, highlighting the value of localisation.

145. The Deputy Director-General advised that renewable energy development calls for policy interventions and innovative policy design that meet the objectives of climate, energy security and access, as well as the development of local renewable energy industries to ensure energy security and other socioeconomic benefits. She underlined that international support is crucial to increase investment flows to higher-risk environments to ensure an inclusive energy transition and reduce the concentration of financing in specific regions. She invited Members to share experiences on renewable energy investment risks faced in their countries and discuss how such risks can be addressed.

146. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi started her presentation by stressing that although energy security, accessibility, affordability and reliability have been major concerns in most parts of the world for decades, the deployment of renewable energy and resulting socio-economic benefits are still limited in a few countries. She presented the trends from the IRENA's forthcoming biannual Global Finance Landscape with CPI which shows that renewable energy investment has grown between 2013 and 2020 by 5% on average each year. She pointed out that taking into consideration the sharp decline in technology costs, the investment growth rate is even higher. She stated that 80% of investments remain focused on PV and offshore wind technologies, which are relatively more mature and cost-competitive, due to technological development and policy support. She noted that, on the contrary, investments in technologies associated with higher risks are still lagging despite the important role some will play in energy transition and decarbonisation of end uses. She provided the examples that geothermal energy is associated with exploration risks while bioenergy faces supply chain risks. She underlined the importance to address the risks for bioenergy through enabling policies, as bioenergy accounts for 18% total energy consumption in IRENA's 1.5°C scenario, and referred to IRENA's report entitled *Bioenergy for the Transition: Ensuring Sustainability and Overcoming Barriers*.

147. In reference to the unbalanced renewable investments, Ms Ferroukhi outlined that East Asia and the Pacific region continues to attract the largest share of global investments, receiving more than half of the total investments in 2021, and Europe and North America received over 30%. She noted that this equates to over 70% of the world population, mostly in developing and emerging countries, received only 20% of global investment, with an even declining trend. She highlighted the concern that this trend may continue as IRENA's newly published report *Renewable energy targets in 2022: A guide to design* shows that the bulk of targeted capacity remains in the same countries that are considered to show lower risks. She further elaborated that IRENA's *Renewable Energy Market Analysis: Africa and its Regions* shows Africa accounts only for 2% of global investments made between 2000 and 2020, with a third in North Africa and leaves SSA less than 1.4%, along with the actual amount dropping from USD 4 billion in 2020 to USD 1 billion in 2021. She summarised that a comprehensive approach across policy, financing and technology is necessary to mobilise funds to underinvested countries that need them the most and only with that, a just and equitable energy transition can be achieved.

148. Ms Ferroukhi then introduced some examples of structured procurement mechanisms and project facilitation to reduce risks. She provided two examples such as the Global Energy Transfer Feed-in Tariff (GET FiT) programme and the Scaling Solar Programme that have been rolling out in many African countries. She mentioned that IRENA has been analysing auction since 2013,

which can be designed to minimise risks and transactional costs on bidders through assigning the costs to government, multilateral development banks (MDBs) or development finance institutions (DFIs). She also affirmed IRENA's support in securing financing through matchmaking at the project level to reduce the challenges to reach commercial visibility and to build robust pipeline scalable projects. She mentioned several joint flagship initiatives including the Climate Investment Platform (CIP) and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform (ETAF).

149. Ms Ferroukhi noted that the focus of auctions on price reduction has led to the concentration of supply chains in a small number of countries, and with the recent trade issues and COVID-related measures disrupting the supply of key components and equipment, it is not crucial to shift the focus of auction to achieving other policy objectives such as socioeconomic development, promotion of local industry, and system integration. She also affirmed the importance of localising value chain to ensure energy security and advised that the policy to develop local supply chains should be part of a broader framework, including the flow of public funding to developing countries. She emphasised the crucial role that public investment plays in creating an enabling environment to attract investments and to influence global renewable energy finance through many different instruments and across different technologies. After she mentioned that IRENA is presently working with many African institutions and countries to explore on an African Green Pact that can advance African's energy transition, Ms Ferroukhi stressed that the entry point in Africa should be through the development angle, which means to it will be crucial to introduce industrial policies to create value for energy transition, and add to economic growth and social wellbeing.

150. Delegations expressed their appreciation on the presentations delivered and shared their experience and expertise, including on supporting projects in high-risk environments, stressing on barriers for the participation of private investors related to regulatory frameworks and financial stability of national utilities, and on the need for training of local developers. Some delegations also shared experience on government strategies and policies and robust frameworks, such as auctions, to reduce and mitigate risks in renewables project investment. The development of a roadmap for de-risking investments in geothermal energy together with the Asian Development Bank was also mentioned.

151. Delegations commended IRENA's Renewables Readiness Assessment, and suggested IRENA is well placed to help overcome barriers and support decision making, including for the electrification of rural areas focusing on public buildings such as schools, hospitals, or public administrations, without excluding vulnerable people. They further suggested that IRENA continue to provide technical support to promote the productive use of renewable energy in the same spirit that is described in the report entitled *Fostering Livelihoods with Decentralised Renewable Energy: An Ecosystems Approach*. They also highlighted the key role IRENA could play in supporting an inclusive market-based approach that would leverage on the existing market potential of renewable energy solutions, reaching vulnerable populations for whom classical market approaches are not viable.

152. Delegations highlighted their solidarity with IRENA's mission and stressed the need to prevent loss of momentum on renewable energy under the current relapse to fossil fuels. In this regard, it was pointed out that the presentation omitted the phase out of fossil fuels, and that fossil fuel subsidies present a key obstacle in the distortion of the market. Delegations expressed appreciation to IRENA on the WETO, which outlines how IRENA can help developing countries, in particular SIDS, to overcome barriers in accelerating their energy transitions, particularly policy and infrastructure. They advised that a comprehensive set of policies is needed,

in addition to new technologies, to achieve an increase in concrete ambition in the NDCs, which is needed to guide investment.

153. Some delegations highlighted the increasing risk associated with securing critical minerals for supply chains, and mentioned joining a partnership for mineral security to diversify imports through international cooperation. IRENA was encouraged to continue supporting countries in accessing available funds and affordable financing through long-term capital or grants to ensure the transition leaves no one behind. Some delegations noted that renewable energy deployment may be achieved faster and more cost-efficiently if there are schemes for regional cooperation and integration that provide access to a wider market for consumers and producers, taking into consideration inflation and currency exchange.

154. Delegations expressed their appreciation for IRENA's efforts in analysing investment risks and the policies to overcome them. In referring to IRENA's global reach, some delegations suggested that a critical area for IRENA to explore is how to help Members support renewable energy deployment at the scale needed to achieve policy objectives. In this regard, it was also acknowledged that technical assessments are an important area to help offer concessional financing and prepare projects to the point of investment. A number of delegations stressed the need for further engagement with the private sector, as well as to continue building collaboration and seeking multilateral fora on cooperation. It was suggested that, in light of COP 27 and COP 28, a global direction on the required de-risking in disadvantaged geographical locations could be established.

155. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi thanked Members for their interventions and support of IRENA's work to date on the analysis of enabling frameworks, capacity building efforts on auctions and targets, and efforts focused on ensuring that the socio-economic objectives and development objectives of many countries are taken into consideration when looking at regulation. She was gratified to hear the importance Members placed on localising supply chains and mentioned the increasing significance of local value creation through regional supply chains and industrial policies. She suggested the need to explore critical minerals in terms of the value they bring to the country and not just in terms of the commodities they provide to the renewable energy sector in general. She mentioned that although the concessionary finance or grants are essential for Africa, the most important entry point on the energy transition for developing countries in general is the link to development and cautioned against continued investment in fossil fuels. On the topic of equity, she highlighted the need to discuss systemic issues in the current global economic system. She suggested therefore, that forthcoming discussions could be about how to continue to develop within the constraints of the carbon budget and how to enable the many economies that have not had the privilege of greater wellbeing and economic value as experienced by the Global North countries.

156. The Council considered and took note the presentation and subsequent discussions.

Agenda Item 10. Administrative and Institutional matters

157. The Chair introduced the item and referred the Council to the outcome of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting held on 19 October 2022, contained in document C/24/CRP/2/Rev.1 – Chair's Summary of the outcome of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) Meeting.

a. Staff Tenure Policy

158. The Chair introduced the agenda item and invited the Facilitator of the Open-ended Group on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above (OEG) and the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) to report to the Council on the work conducted on this item.

159. Dr Gloria Magombo, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Energy and Power Development, Zimbabwe and Facilitator of the Open-ended Group on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above (OEG), reported that the third meeting of the OEG was held on 6 October 2022 in a virtual format, and was attended by 17 participants representing 15 Members. She informed the Council that the OEG did not reach a consensus on the issue of Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above, and further reported that the proposal of granting an extension of the tenure limit for up to thirteen years for all Professional staff and above also was not endorsed by Members. Dr Magombo added that the OEG requested the Secretariat to provide further information on the proposal to join the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) and the Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA). She also highlighted that Members conveyed their readiness to bring the tenure discussion to a closure.

160. The Chair of the AFC, Maldives, represented by Mr Ahmed Ali, Director General, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology reported on the outcomes of the AFC meeting on 19 October 2022. He expressed his appreciation to Germany as Vice-Chair of the AFC, as well as the AFC members and IRENA Members that participated in the discussions and provided feedback.

161. With regard to the AFC's deliberations on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above, Mr Ali reported that the Secretariat outlined its proposals and provided a summary of the feedback and next steps received from the OEG, as well as a presentation, based on this feedback, on specific requirements and implications of joining the UNJSPF and IAA. He further reported that some participants noted the initiative for joining the UNJSPF and IAA, stating that these measures could be helpful in positioning the Agency as an employer of choice in the market of international organisations, and requested additional information, including the projected cost and other implications. Mr Ali also relayed that participants highlighted the need for additional Human Resource initiatives such as policies on succession planning, talent acquisition, and retention, which could help the Agency better respond to challenges posed by global competition. He informed that the AFC took note of all interventions and that there was no consensus reached on the proposals presented by the Secretariat on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above.

162. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to the Council for their engagement on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above, as well as to the Facilitator of the OEG and the Chair of the AFC for their facilitating efforts. He expressed his appreciation for the frank and comprehensive feedback received from Members and suggested that, taking into consideration the views received and that no consensus was reached, the discussion on the tenure proposals be closed, with the option to explore the matter further in the future as appropriate. He acknowledged the request by Members to focus on developing and strengthening the Agency's Human Resources initiatives to be an employer of choice. He clarified that the tenure policy presently in place will remain the same and reiterated the Secretariat's commitment to following-up on the work in relation to the UNJSPF and IAA, and to reporting to Members on the progress.

163. Delegations agreed with the views expressed on not pursuing discussions on changes to the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above at this point in time, and to only continue

discussions on the matter if the Council decides it is necessary. Delegations underlined the importance of staff retention and decreasing staff turnover rate, and a number of delegations requested the Secretariat to provide Human Resources trends related to retention, turnover rate and years of service as standard reporting at the Council meetings. One delegation called for an independent Human Resources audit to review and understand the reasons for the current staff turnover rate.

164. To facilitate common understanding on the matter, a delegation recapped for the record that the tenure limit for Professional staff and above hired after 15 January 2017 will remain at seven plus two years, as established prior to January 2017, notwithstanding the fact that staff hired before 15 January 2017 were granted an exception to this rule through the Assembly Decision on Temporary Measure on Length of Staff Service (A/7/DC/4). This delegation noted that, as decided by the Assembly at its twelfth session through the Decision on Length of Service for Staff at the General Service Category (A/12/DC/2), General Service staff will not be confined to these limits. This delegation summarised that the criteria for exceptionally granting an extension for up to three years for staff hired after 15 January 2017 may be considered at a future date, as necessary. Some delegations noted the initiatives on the inclusion of IRENA in the UNJSPF and IAA but requested further analysis on the matter.

165. The Council took note of the report by the Facilitator of the Open-ended Group on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above and the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, and agreed to maintain the current tenure policy for Professional staff and above. The Council also requested the Secretariat to provide further information and analysis on shifting to the UNJSPF and for the IAA initiative to the Council at its twenty-fifth meeting.

b. Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest (C/24/4)

166. Ms Jelena Barnes, Ethics Officer at IRENA introduced the Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest and on the disclosure of interest procedure for the period 26 September 2021 to 30 September 2022. She reported that during the reporting period, the Ethics Officer provided confidential guidance and advice to 11 staff on questions of ethics, outside employment or activities, including the disclosure of interest procedure. She noted that eight staff members submitted requests for outside activities which were reviewed and adequately processed. She conveyed that no requests requiring investigation or consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board have been lodged with the Ethics Officer during the reporting period. She affirmed that detailed instructions in relation to the disclosure of interest forms have been prepared and circulated to 33 covered individuals who were required to complete the form for the 2021 filing cycle. She noted 100% of the requested individuals have complied with the requirement, and further noted the review of their submissions didn't reveal any conflicts of interest with the Agency.

167. Ms Barnes reported that 95% of active staff have completed the mandatory online ethics course entitled Ethics and Integrity at IRENA, as of 30 September 2022. She advised that all newly appointed staff are required to complete the mandatory training course as part of their onboarding procedure. She confirmed that continued efforts are made to increase awareness of ethical behaviour and conduct, mainly through online platforms to staff in all IRENA offices. She concluded that the Agency is committed to strengthening ethical practices and enforcing ethical management with further enhancements made to the dedicated internal webpage and training being planned for the next reporting period.

168. **The Council took note of the Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest as contained in C/24/4 and agreed to submit it to the Assembly at its thirteenth session.**

c. Report of the Director-General - Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken (C/24/5)

169. The Director-General presented his Report on Activities of the Internal Audit Office (IAO), and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken, which covers the period from 26 April to 27 September 2022. He advised that the IAO implemented the following actions:

- Initiated the audit of voluntary contributions, in accordance with the IAO Work Plan for the Work Programme and Budget 2022-2023. The recommendation and agreed action to be taken will be reported to the Council upon report finalisation.
- Follow-up on the status of implementation of internal audit recommendations related to the previous audit of consultancy services. Based on the result of validation procedures performed, IAO noted that the Division of Administration and Management Service is in the process of drafting a policy directive for the engagement of individual consultants at IRENA, taking into consideration relevant IAO recommendations in this regard.
- Follow-up on the status of implementation of the external audit recommendations as contained in document C/24/6.
- In the context of updating the Internal Audit Charter, an internal communication strategy was developed to facilitate understanding and develop increased awareness across IRENA divisions on the revision being proposed to the Internal Audit Charter. The revisions pertain to the scope of work, purpose, authority, responsibility, accountability of IAO, as well as arrangements for governance over the oversight system to adhere to Internal Audit (IIA) standards. The Director-General reported that upon implementation of the internal communication strategy, the updated Internal Audit Charter will be presented to the Council for its consideration and guidance.

170. **The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on the Internal Audit Office and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken contained in document C/24/5.**

d. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations (C/24/6)

171. Mr Aboubacar Touré, Director of Administration and Management Services of IRENA, presented the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations as contained in C/24/6. He reported that pursuant to the Financial Regulation 12.1, the Director-General submitted the annual financial statement of IRENA for the year ending 31 December 2021 to the External Auditor, which was submitted to the twenty-third meeting of the Council together with the External Auditor Report and the Director-General's report thereon, to the twenty-third meeting of the Council, contained in C/23/4. He stated that the External Auditor issued one new recommendation arising from the 2021 and that the progress on implementation of this recommendation is presented in the annex to the report C/24/6.

172. **The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations as contained in C/24/6 and agreed to submit it to the Assembly at its thirteenth session.**

e. Report of the Director-General - Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023 (C/24/7)

173. Mr Aboubacar Touré presented the Report of the Director-General on Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023, contained in C/24/7. He explained that, in accordance with IRENA's Financial Regulation 6.1, the IRENA Scale of Contribution is based on the 2022-2024 United Nations Scale of Assessments and is adjusted to IRENA's Membership. He announced that one new country joined the Agency since January 2021 and the Indicative IRENA Scale of Contribution for 2023 reflects this inclusion, comprising 167 countries and the European Union. He conveyed that the scale will be adjusted accordingly if additional Members join the Agency by the thirteenth session of the Assembly.

174. **The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General - Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023 as contained in C/24/7 and agreed to submit it to the Assembly at its thirteenth session.**

f. Report of the Director-General - Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund (C/24/INF/2)

175. Mr Aboubacar Touré presented the Report of the Director-General - Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund as of 14 September 2022, contained in C/24/INF/2, which provides a full status of overall contributions for Members, those who became Members in 2022 and Members whose arrears have reached or exceeded the amount of its contributions for the two preceding years.

176. **The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General - Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund, contained in document C/24/INF/2.**

g. Staff Provident Fund - Appointment of Management Board members

177. The Chair recalled that the two-year term of the current representatives to the Management Board of the IRENA Staff Provident Fund (SPF) will end at the thirteenth session of the Assembly, whereupon two representatives will be appointed. He informed the Council that the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom have expressed their availability to serve as Members' representatives to the SPF Management Board for 2023-2024.

178. **The Council took note of the proposal to designate the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom¹ as representatives to the Management Board of the Staff Provident Fund and agreed to submit to the Assembly at its thirteenth session.**

¹ On 10 November 2022, the United Kingdom has withdrawn its expression of interest to serve as a Member representative to the Management Board for 2023-2024. Subsequent to this withdrawal, the Council Chair with the support of the Secretariat, is conducting outreach to interested Members for membership to the Management Board for 2023-2024. A proposal will be presented by the Chair at the thirteenth session of the Assembly.

h. Report of the Director-General - Secondment of Personnel and related matters (C/24/8)

179. Mr Aboubacar Touré presented the Report of the Director-General on Secondment of Personnel and related matters, contained in document C/24/8 and informed the Council that the report provides an update on the implementation of the secondment and loan arrangements since the last report to the Council at its twentieth meeting in November 2020. He elaborated on the two types of secondment arrangements approved by the Assembly as contained in decision A/2/DC/5, that the first arrangement relates to an individual who is employed by a government, public sector entity, or an international organisation and is selected for a vacant position is appointed as a staff member of the Agency with the same rights, duties, and obligations as per other IRENA staff members. He noted that the following three staff members were appointed under such arrangement during the reporting period from September 2020 to September 2022, an officer seconded from Italy serving in the Office of Director-General, an officer seconded from the Republic of Korea serving in the Country Engagement and Partnerships Division, and an officer seconded from Denmark employed at the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre.

180. He explained that the second type of secondment arrangement concerns governments, public sector entities, or international organisations, which have agreed to participate in the Junior Professional Officer or Associate Expert Programme and have made voluntary contributions to IRENA to finance the full cost of hiring qualified staff members for a period of one to three years. He announced that one such arrangement between IRENA and the Republic of Korea involved the employment of a Junior Professional Officer and was concluded during the reporting period. He explained that one individual is expected to join the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre in 2023 under such arrangement pursuant to the agreement between IRENA and Germany concerning the employment of Associate Experts.

181. On the implementation of the loan arrangement, he reported that three loan arrangements were concluded with two Members during the reporting period. He further reported that under this arrangement six individuals are currently serving the Agency as follows: One loaned officer each from China and from the Republic of Korea, at the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre, three loaned officers from the United Arab Emirates, in the Office of the Director-General and in the Country Engagement and Partnerships Division, and one officer on loan from Italy, serving in the Project Facilitation and Support Division.

182. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General - Secondment of Personnel and related matters as contained in C/24/8 and agreed to submit it to the Assembly at its thirteenth session.

i. Update by regional facilitators on nominations for 2023-2024 Council membership

183. The Chair informed the Council that the two-year term of the current members of the Council will end on 31 December 2022 and that the Assembly, at its thirteenth session will decide on the composition of the IRENA Council for 2023-2024. He noted that El Salvador, as president of the twelfth session of the Assembly, invited Members to express their interest in Council membership by 4 March 2022. The Chair conveyed that El Salvador, along with the Vice-Presidents of the twelfth session of the Assembly, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Greece agreed to facilitate discussions among the four regional groups prior to the thirteenth session of the Assembly in January 2023.

184. The Chair recalled that Egypt informed the twenty-third meeting of the Council of the agreement of the Africa Regional Group in their nominations of Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe as Council members, and Mauritius, Togo, and Uganda as alternates for 2023–2024.

185. Bangladesh announced that the Asia and the Pacific Regional Group has convened consultations, but no consensus was reached. He announced the Group will continue negotiations to receive a consensus before the thirteenth session of the Assembly.

186. Greece reported that for the Europe and Others Regional Group, ten countries submitted expressions of interest within the given deadline: Canada, Italy, Spain, Germany, the United States of America, Denmark, Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Portugal, and Greece. He further reported that a consensus was reached after recent consultations and the nominations of the Members and alternates for Council membership for 2023-2024 will be shared with the President of the thirteenth Assembly.

187. Antigua and Barbuda, the Facilitator of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Group, announced the interest in candidature for Council membership 2023-2024 was received from Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Honduras, and Panama and Council alternate candidates for the Group are Saint Lucia and Uruguay. The Facilitator recalled from the one of the three Council seats allocated to the Group is reserved for CARICOM members. He informed the Council that the candidate countries have reached a consensus on the slate of nominations which he will relay to all members of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group and will inform the President of the thirteenth Assembly accordingly.

188. The Council took note of the update by regional facilitators on nominations for 2023-2024 Council membership.

Agenda Item 11. Arrangements for the thirteenth session of the Assembly (C/24/9)

189. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to the Host Country for the hospitality and support that enables an in-person session of the Assembly. He announced that the thirteenth session of the Assembly is scheduled for 14–15 January 2023 at the St. Regis Hotel in Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi. He advised that the session will be preceded by a full day of a high-level and stakeholder events on the 13 January 2023.

190. He declared the thirteenth session of the Assembly will provide a timely opportunity for the membership partners and stakeholders to engage in inclusive and diverse discussion on the actions implemented and progress made in accelerating the energy transition, including, in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. He noted that it also provides an opportunity to explore further how IRENA may support Members in their ambition to create enabling frameworks, attract investment, and accelerate energy transition at the speed required by climate, energy, and development imperatives. He added that it will also build on some of the issues that were discussed during this Council meeting.

191. He introduced the high-level and stakeholder events on 13 January 2023, which include a Ministerial event on SIDS to allow for exchanges on perspectives from countries affected most by climate change, as well as Legislators Forum, Public-Private Dialogue, and Youth Forum to continue to provide further insights to strengthen international cooperation and collaboration in

support of a rapid global energy transition to accelerate adaptation and mitigation actions and achieve a just and inclusive future based on renewables.

192. He relayed that the official opening of the thirteenth session of the Assembly will take place on Saturday, 14 January 2023, with high-level statements to be provided by the President of the Assembly and the Host Country. He also announced that, to mark the third World Energy Transition Day, a high-level session on Global Stocktake will gather global leaders and energy transition makers to take stock of operational plans and policies, and to highlight the concerted actions undertaken to implement the energy transition across countries, regions, and the world.

193. He announced a number of Ministerial and High-level sessions will be held to facilitate interaction amongst decision makers and inform the future work of IRENA. He further announced that the sessions will cover pressing issues highlighted by the Members that related to the energy transition in the coming decade and beyond, such as critical material supply and management, the world energy, food nexus, enabling framework for regional energy transition, and financing investment needs, among others. He advised the Members will also have opportunities to gain deeper insight into IRENA's newly launched initiatives including the Investment Forums and the ETAF Platform. He added that the Secretariat will present the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022–2023 and the Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2023–2027, as well as a number of administrative and institutional matters.

194. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany reminded the Council that the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week will open on Monday, 16 January 2023, after the Assembly and she encouraged Members to inform their capitals accordingly in order to ensure vast and high-level representation and active participation, both for the opening ceremony and for different conferences during the week. She also flagged that announcements regarding the upcoming COP28 will take place. She further mentioned the positive feedback received from Women in Diplomacy event, jointly hosted with IRENA in October 2022 and encouraged high-level female representation as a similar event will be hosted during the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week.

195. It was requested that the agenda for the thirteenth session of the Assembly be prepared in consultation with the Presidency-Designate of the upcoming Assembly, who has the responsibility to drive the agenda forward. The SIDS session at the upcoming Assembly was also welcomed, and it was suggested that the outcomes from the session could feed into the fourth International Conference on SIDS in 2024.

196. The Council took note and approved the Arrangements for the thirteenth session of the Assembly as contained in C/24/9.

Agenda Item 12. Arrangements for the twenty-fifth meeting of the Council

197. The Chair noted the proposal for the twenty-fifth meeting of the Council to be held on 23 and 24 May 2023 in Abu Dhabi, with the meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council scheduled for 22 May 2023.

198. The Chair noted the proposal for the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council to be held on 19 and 20 October 2023 in Abu Dhabi, with the meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council scheduled for 18 October 2023, noting that the schedule is subject to final determination by the Council at its twenty-fifth meeting.

199. **The Council took note and agreed that the twenty-fifth meeting of the Council will take place on 23 – 24 May 2023, with meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council scheduled for 22 May 2023.**

Agenda Item 13. Any other business

Proposed establishment of an IRENA regional office in Singapore

200. The Chair invited the Council to take up item 13 – Any Other business. He invited Singapore to present its proposal entitled ‘Proposed establishment of an IRENA Regional Office in Singapore’.

201. At the outset, Singapore presented its proposal to establish an IRENA regional office in Singapore, highlighting Asia’s growing energy demand and huge potential to expand renewable energy capacity, as well as Singapore’s advantage in infrastructure, financial services and regional interconnection. Delegations, in recognition of Asia’s crucial role in global energy transition and combating climate change, thanked Singapore for its proposal and stressed the need to further understand it, including potential merits, objective, function, associated budgetary sources, staffing and oversight, reporting mechanisms to the governing bodies, division of work with the IRENA Headquarters, and timelines, governance and institutional linkage issues, among others. Delegations further stressed the need to avoid duplication of work and overlap with the regional offices of other international organisations.

202. Delegations also noted that the IRENA Statute and Rules of Procedure do not address the establishment of regional offices of IRENA. Some delegations further underlined that the issue of regional offices of IRENA is not included in IRENA’s Medium-term Strategy for 2023-2027 in terms of strategic direction of future work. Delegations stressed the importance of defining a clear decision-making process for such proposals from any region. To this end, several delegations supported a proposal to establish an Open-ended Group to continue discussions on the matter. Delegations further requested that arrangements be made for the first meeting of this Group, and that an invitation be sent for expressions of interest to facilitate the Group. In this regard, delegations also advised that the Open-ended Group should at the outset understand the issues relating to the creation of regional offices, including the establishment of rules, procedures, and policies. After the deliberations by the Council, Singapore thanked Members for their feedback and their willingness to engage in the discussions in the Open-ended Group, and stated that Singapore is prepared to flesh out its proposal at the same time.

203. The Council agreed to create an Open-ended Group to discuss the creation and related processes, procedures and policies on the establishment of regional offices of IRENA.

IRENA’s Preparations for COP 27

204. Ms Elizabeth Press, Director, Planning and Programme Support (PPS) presented a brief presentation on IRENA’s preparations for COP27. She expressed her appreciation to the Government of Egypt, as Host of COP27, for their close collaboration with IRENA. She outlined Egypt’s priorities for COP27 and introduced two streams of IRENA’s engagement. She also highlighted IRENA’s support to Egypt on the energy transition in the priority areas including the Africa Just and Affordable Energy Transition Initiative (AJAETI), Global Renewable Hydrogen

Forum, Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe), and Action on Water Adaptation and Resilience (AWARE).

205. The Director-General highlighted the launch of the call for projects for the ETAF Platform as well as other events at the IRENA Pavilion. He added that on the COP28 preparation, IRENA has formed a common working group for discussion on items of interest and intends to meet before the end of COP27 and will also take stock of COP27 in the collaborative discussions for the interest of the Assembly.

206. A number of delegations welcomed the brief presentation, highlighting the importance of renewable energy in addressing climate change. In this regard, a request was made for a document containing detailed information on the planning and outcomes from IRENA's engagement at COP27, as well as plans for engagement at COP28. A delegation noted that an event entitled 'Closing the Gap: Securing Lives, Creating Livelihoods in Small Island Developing States' will be held at COP27, as part of the engagement between the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative.

Upcoming Renewables Talk

207. A delegation announced that they will host the Renewables Talk on 24 November 2022, entitled Renewables for Small Island States: Perspectives and Outlook from Malta, in partnership with IRENA and the Permanent Mission of the UAE to IRENA, and extended an invitation to all delegations.

Proposal on amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of IRENA

208. The representative of the European Union proposed an amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of IRENA, noting that, as a Member of IRENA, the European Union should be added to the list of regional groups mentioned in the Annex under Rule 69. To understand this proposal further, it was requested that the proponent elaborate on the implications of this proposal, including with respect to voting rights at the Council, and any other relevant information.

209. The Council requested the proponent delegation to submit a formal proposal for consideration by the Council at its twenty-fifth meeting.

Agenda Item 14. Closing of the meeting

210. In his closing statement, the Director-General expressed his gratitude to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Council members for skilfully, equitably and constructively leading to the successful conclusion of the meeting. Touching on some key reflections, he noted the Agency is at the heart of Members interventions. He mentioned that IRENA is committed to continuously improve its support to Members and welcomed feedback on the refurbished IRENA website which reflects that the Agency prioritises focus on the advancement of the renewable based energy transition, as well as showcases the impact of IRENA's work and successes through collaborating with Members and other partners. On the ground-breaking initiatives to engage with the youth, the Director-General expressed his gratitude to the eight students that joined to support the Council meeting under the IRENA Student Trainee Programme, and he announced the recent launch for applications to select 35 young individuals to participate in IRENA's Youth Forum during the thirteenth session of the Assembly. He also encouraged Members to include young professionals

in their delegations. He reflected that the interventions highlighted the complex global crises that threaten to derail renewable energy transition efforts. He underlined the need to remain focused on long-term goals in light of the forthcoming thirteenth session of the Assembly in January 2023, where he trusts the positive and decisive action emerging from COP 27 and on the road to COP28 would inspire the discussions.

211. The Chair expressed his honour at being appointed to guide deliberations and facilitate the feedback from Members on the Agency's current and future programmatic work. He summarised that Members reflected on the challenges encountered and solutions, and also expressed their needs, capacities, and expectations for the future. He stated that crises present opportunities and called for building on this momentum to accelerate concrete actions on the energy transition.

212. The Chair declared the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council closed.

Twenty-fourth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 27-28 October 2022

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Organisation of work**
 - a. Election of officials
 - b. Adoption of the agenda
 - c. Adoption of the report of the twenty-third meeting of the Council
- 3. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023**
- 4. Reports on Collaborative Frameworks**
- 5. Member Experiences on the Energy Transition**
- 6. Draft Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2027 - Report of the Director-General**
- 7. Programmatic discussion on Accelerating Hydrogen – Opportunities for International Cooperation**
- 8. Programmatic discussion on Integrating Renewable Energy into Agri-food and Health Value Chains**
- 9. Programmatic discussion on Enabling Frameworks for the Energy Transition in Higher-Risk Environments**
- 10. Administrative and Institutional matters**
 - a. Staff Tenure Policy
 - b. Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest
 - c. Report of the Director-General - Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken
 - d. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations
 - e. Report of the Director-General - Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023
 - f. Report of the Director-General - Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund
 - g. Staff Provident Fund - Appointment of Management Board members
 - h. Report of the Director-General - Secondment of Personnel and related matters

- i. Update by regional facilitators on nominations for 2023-2024 Council membership

11. Arrangements for the thirteenth session of the Assembly

12. Arrangements for the twenty-fifth meeting of the Council

13. Any other business

14. Closing of the meeting

Twenty-fourth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 27-28 October 2022

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Programme and Strategy Committee (hereafter “PSC” or “Committee”) met on 18 October 2022. All Committee members attended the meeting, including Algeria (Vice-Chair of the PSC). The Committee reflected on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, including updates on the Collaborative Frameworks, and focused discussions on the Report of the Director-General on the Draft Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in her summary below to be presented to the Council at its twenty-fourth meeting on 27-28 October 2022.

Chair’s Summary of the outcome of the Programme and Strategy Committee Meeting

1. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (C/24/2), including updates on Collaborative Frameworks

The Secretariat briefed participants on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 and shared some programmatic highlights. Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC welcomed the progress made in the implementation of programmatic activities, and expressed gratitude to IRENA for its work in this regard.
- A participant called on IRENA to provide technical assistance to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on tackling the negative externalities of the energy transition such as the dumping of obsolete assets.
- A participant welcomed the progress on the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform.
- A participant referred to the current energy crisis and the importance of staying on course in terms of the energy transition, and called on the Secretariat to research the number of countries that have stepped back on their ambition in their NDCs.

2. Draft Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 – Report of the Director-General (C/24/3)

The Director-General introduced the Report on the Draft Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC expressed appreciation for the inclusive and transparent process of developing the Medium-term Strategy and thanked Denmark and Kenya, the co-facilitators of the MTS Working Team, for guiding the work over the past 18 months.
- The PSC welcomed the current Draft MTS as it provides clear strategic direction to IRENA on how to remain the preeminent normative voice on renewables, considering the changing energy landscape and multitude of actors entering the space.
- The PSC expressed support for the strategic direction put forward by the proposed mission statement and focus on systemic and nexus issues. Participants suggested adjustments such as the inclusion of reference to the 1.5°C goal in the mission statement, and transitional risks related to the energy transition of SIDS.
- A participant welcomed the vision presented in the IRENA Theory of Change, suggesting an explicit alignment with the mission statement.
- A participant commended IRENA for the development of high-quality knowledge products such as the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation: The Hydrogen Factor report, and encouraged the Agency to deepen its research on the economics of the energy transition. Another participant called for greater strategic emphasis on the emerging argument that renewable energy is secure energy and the benefits of fully renewable systems, with special focus on hard-to-abate sectors, under the first and third pillar.
- The PSC welcomed the pillar on International Collaboration and Network Hub, underlining the importance of efficient collaboration with a broad range of actors, to draw from their expertise and knowledge. A participant recognised the value of Collaborative Frameworks in harnessing broad knowledge and experiences but called for streamlining them to maximise impact.
- A participant welcomed the focus of pillar four on Support for Regions and Countries, in particular the focus on LDCs, SIDS and African countries, and called for further strengthening cross-border energy systems and markets.
- The PSC welcomed the pillar on Facilitating Projects and Mobilising Capital and underscored the urgency to focus on markets facing difficulties in attracting investments and to deepen collaboration with financing partners.
- The PSC welcomed the proposal to broaden the IRENA resource base through the Renewables Acceleration Fund, emphasising the importance of stable funding sources and efficient resource allocation.

Twenty-fourth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 27-28 October 2022

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Administration and Finance Committee (hereafter “AFC” or “Committee”) met on 19 October 2022. It reviewed matters related to the Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, Staff Tenure Policy, Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken, Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations, Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023, Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund, and Secondment of Personnel and related matters.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in his summary below to be presented to the Council at its twenty-fourth meeting on 27 and 28 October 2022.

Chair’s Summary of the outcome of the Administration and Finance Committee Meeting

The following comments and recommendations were made:

1. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023

- The Secretariat introduced the report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, contained in document C/24/2.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

2. Staff Tenure Policy

- The Director-General introduced the Staff Tenure Policy.
- The Secretariat, in its presentation, outlined its proposals to harmonize staff tenure and grant the Director-General the flexibility to approve exceptional extensions of Professional staff and above of the Agency for up to 3 years beyond the authorised tenure limits. The Secretariat also provided a summary of the feedback and next steps received from Members at the Open-Ended Group on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above (OEG).
- Based on the requests received from the OEG, the Secretariat presented the detailed criteria and internal review mechanism for the proposed exceptional extension, and also briefed Members about specific requirements and implications of joining the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) and Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA).
- Some participants welcomed the Secretariat’s presentation outlining more detailed criteria and internal review mechanism for extending staff tenure for an additional period of up to 3 years. Some participants, however, requested that this discussion be continued beyond the 24th Council meeting.
- Some participants expressed their support for the HR initiatives on joining the UNJSPF and IAA, stating that these measures will be helpful in positioning the Agency as an

employer of choice in the market of international organisations. At the same time, some participants asked for additional information, including the projected costs and other implications of these initiatives.

- A number of participants requested the Secretariat to provide specific data on staff recruitment and attrition as well as similar information and statistics in comparable international agencies. The participants highlighted the need for putting in place additional HR initiatives such as policies on succession planning, talent acquisition and retention that can help the Agency to better respond to the challenges posed by global competition.
- In his reflections, the Director-General highlighted the challenges associated with imminent senior staff departures and the very tight timeframe for efficiently addressing the associated gaps. He also requested that Members positively consider some exceptional measures the Agency may undertake such as ‘freezing’ the application of the tenure policy for about two years until such gaps are duly closed². He also indicated that the work on these important matters may go beyond the 24th Council and that adequate time and effort need to be invested to finalise this discussion.
- The AFC took note of the interventions and remarks.

3. Report of the Director-General – Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken

- The Director-General introduced the ‘Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken’ as contained in document C/24/5.
- The AFC considered the report and decided to submit it to the Council for its consideration.

4. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations

- The Secretariat introduced the ‘Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations’, contained in document C/24/6.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

5. Report of the Director-General on the Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023

- The Secretariat introduced the ‘Indicative IRENA Scale of Contributions for 2023’, contained in document C/24/7.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

6. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund

- The Secretariat introduced the ‘Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund’, contained in document C/24/INF/2.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

² Freezing will not affect the standing tenure policy (including the current policy provisions governing the maximum tenure duration). It is proposed as a possible way forward given the extraordinary nature of challenges the Agency is faced with, notably, several high-profile staff departures and the urgency to lead the global effort on COP 28. It entails that the application of tenure policy will be suspended for the duration of the ‘freeze’. It is a one-off arrangement for this special period, which will apply across the board to all professional staff at IRENA.

7. Report of the Director-General - Secondment of Personnel and related matters

- The Secretariat introduced the 'Secondment of Personnel and related matters', contained in document C/24/8.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

Twenty-fourth meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 27-28 October 2022

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	Ms Ana Clara Costa	Senior Officer Directorate General for Energy and Geology, Lisbon
	Mr Diogo Vaz	Senior Official Ministry of Environment and Climate Action, Lisbon
	Mr Rui Pereira	Expert Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon
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	Mr Luay Jadoun	Senior Economist Qatar Energy, Doha
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	Mr Ahmed Al Dowsary	Senior Specialist Ministry of Energy, Riyadh
	Mr Hosam Alnaser	Supervisor of International Framework Office King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, Riyadh
	Mr Hussain Shibli	Supervisor of Renewable Energy Sector King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, Riyadh
	Mr Saad AlQahtani	Renewable Energy Engineer King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, Riyadh

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	Mr Jonathan Goh	Director Energy Market Authority, Singapore
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	Mr Nicholas De Silva	Second Secretary Embassy of Singapore to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
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	Mr Lucius Tan	Analyst Energy Market Authority, Singapore
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	Ms Princess Nxumalo	Coordinator Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Pretoria
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	Mr Juan Bautista Martinez Amiguetti	Area Coordinator Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Madrid
	Mr Luis Ciro Perez	Coordinator

		Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Madrid
	Ms Encarnación Porras	Project Manager Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenges, Madrid
	Mr Ignacio Valero	Project Manager Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenges, Madrid
	Mr Juan Rubio	Area Manager Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Madrid
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	Ms Azza Mohammed	First Secretary Embassy of Sudan to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
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	Mr Thiti Rtachadatikun	Analyst Ministry of Energy, Bangkok
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	Mr Arkorn Soikaew	Scientist Ministry of Energy, Bangkok
	Mr Anupong Sukee	Scientist Ministry of Energy, Bangkok
	Mr Watcharin Pachittyen	Engineer Ministry of Energy, Bangkok

	Mr Nirute Sangkpaen	Civil Engineer Ministry of Energy, Bangkok
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	Mr Yaroslav Linkevych	Second Secretary Embassy of Ukraine to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
YEMEN	Mr Mohammed Al-Awlaqi	Second Secretary Embassy of Yemen to the UAE, Abu Dhabi

D. SIGNATORIES / STATES-IN-ACCESSION

BRAZIL	Ms Nadia El Kadre	Second Secretary Embassy of Brazil to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
GUATEMALA	H.E. Mr Willy Tirado	Ambassador Embassy of Guatemala to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
	Mr Carlos Cazali Diaz	Deputy Chief of Mission Embassy of Guatemala to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
	Mr Jose Bassila	Counsellor Embassy of Guatemala to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
GUINEA-BISSAU	Mr Julio Antonio Raul	Advisor to the Minister Ministry of Energy and Industry, Bissau
MALAWI	Mr Joseph Kalowekamo	Acting Director Ministry of Energy, Lilongwe

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	H.E. Mr Ghassan Abbas	Chargé d'Affaires Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
	Ms Rania Al Rifaiy	Minister Plenipotentiary Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
	Mr Fadi Massa	Secretary/Engineer Resources and Energy Committee in the Prime Minister's Office, Damascus

E. NON-MEMBERS

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	Mr Nabil Khalek	Advisor Embassy of Venezuela to the UAE, Abu Dhabi
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