

Twenty-seventh meeting of the Council  
Abu Dhabi, 13-14 June 2024

**REPORT**  
**OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**  
**OF THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY**

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## Report of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency

1. The twenty-seventh meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was held in a hybrid format in Abu Dhabi on 13-14 June 2024. The meeting was attended by 20 Council members: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Portugal, Rwanda, Spain, Tonga, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, and Zimbabwe, as well as 11 Council alternates: Cyprus, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Uganda, and Uruguay. Also in attendance were delegations of 69 other IRENA Members and four States in Accession and other United Nations Member States.

### **Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

2. The Chair of the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council of IRENA, the United States of America, represented by Mr Chris Davy, Director for Energy Transformation at the Department of State, opened the meeting. He expressed appreciation to the United Arab Emirates, represented by H.E. Dr Nawal Al Hosany, for co-hosting the joint event of the Renewables Talk for IRENA Permanent Representatives and the Women in Diplomacy on 12 June 2024, in partnership with IRENA and the Embassy of Dominican Republic to the United Arab Emirates, highlighting the importance of the event in confronting the stigma that the energy industry is a male dominated industry.

3. Mr Davy expressed gratitude to Panama, represented by H.E. Ms Rebeca Pérez, Ambassador of Panama to the United Arab Emirates, for supporting the deliberations as Vice-Chair of the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council, and to Council members for their dedication to the work of IRENA.

4. Mr Davy reflected that when the twenty-sixth Council convened in October 2023, the opening of COP28 was weeks away, and the United States of America represented one of many voices across the IRENA Membership in calling upon the Secretariat as well as Members to remain focused on ensuring a successful COP. Noting the historical success of COP28 in the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner, and to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030, Mr Davy congratulated the United Arab Emirates, as COP28 President and Host Country, on the remarkable achievements. He also took the opportunity to congratulate Azerbaijan, as President-Designate of COP29.

5. Highlighting the notable role of IRENA in advocating and providing technical advice for the pledge to triple renewables by 2030, Mr Davy underlined the necessity of achieving this goal in order to reach collective net zero ambitions, and expressed the view that IRENA can and must play a role in helping its Membership triple renewable energy by 2030. He reflected on concerning findings and events with regard to rapid global warming and evacuation of coastal communities from areas where sea levels have risen, amongst others, and stressed that these warnings cannot be ignored.

6. Drawing upon the findings of IRENA's World Energy Transitions Outlook (WETO) 2024 Brief, Mr Davy noted that global renewable energy capacity reached 3.87 terawatts (TW) in 2023, and that renewables represented 86% of new energy capacity in the same year, observing that this progress reflects what the IRENA Membership is capable of doing through focus and

commitment. In this regard, he underscored that tripling global renewable energy capacity in the next six years is a challenging task that requires rapid action, and expressed that it is achievable through collective efforts.

**Agenda Item 2: Organisation of work**

**a. Election of officials**

**7. The Council elected by acclamation Zimbabwe, represented by Dr Gloria Sibusisiwe Magombo, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Energy and Power Development, as Chair, and Bangladesh, represented by H.E. Mr Mohammed Abu Zafar, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, as Vice-Chair of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council.**

**8. As proposed by the Chair, Antigua and Barbuda, represented by Mr Tumasie Blair, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was appointed as Rapporteur of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council.**

9. Dr Gloria Magombo in her opening remarks expressed that it was an honour for Zimbabwe to be elected as Chair of the twenty-seventh meeting of the IRENA Council. She further stated that Zimbabwe is deeply honoured by the trust placed on them, and reiterated their commitment to working collaboratively with Council members and the broader IRENA Membership, in supporting IRENA's mission and in achieving common goals in the deployment of renewable energy.

10. Dr Magombo expressed her immense gratitude and underlined the profound sense of responsibility she attaches in her role as Chair of the Council, in guiding the work and discussions of this Council on the implementation of the current Work Programme, as well as addressing important administrative and institutional issues. She acknowledged the presence of Zimbabwe's Permanent Representative to IRENA, H.E. Mr Lovemore Mazemo, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the United Arab Emirates, and the head of the delegation during the Council meeting.

11. The Chair commended IRENA for the road towards energy transition walked so far, highlighting that from the World Energy Transitions Outlook, it was clear that investment in renewable energy has significantly increased over the years. In addition, she noted that the new installed capacity of renewable energy has kept a positive trajectory to date and that results are due to the collaborative effort of the Membership of IRENA and the Secretariat. She underlined that the role of IRENA as a repository of renewable energy information, data and knowledge has contributed to demystifying the reality about renewables as the energy of the future. She emphasised the need for the world to refocus on how to ensure that the pledges and the principles around energy transition are all turned into action.

12. Dr Magombo stressed that the deployment of renewables present both significant challenges and promising opportunities for the energy sector. She noted that effective climate action and the global deployment of renewable energy technologies rely on sufficient, reliable and affordable supply of critical energy transition minerals (CETMs). For the energy transition to be just, these minerals must be extracted, processed, transformed and recycled sustainably and equitably. She highlighted that given the volume of extraction and processing required, the expected pace of development, and the geographical concentration, CETMs are of particular importance to sustainable development, relations between nations, industrialisation and structural transformation priorities, especially for mineral-producing developing countries.

13. She underlined that Zimbabwe is deeply committed to the global energy transition, recognising the urgency of climate action, achievement of SDG7 and the vast potential of renewable energy sources. She recalled that global renewable energy ambitions are high, and include the achievement of universal access to modern and sustainable energy by 2030, deployment of 2,100MW or up to 26.5% renewables contributing to electricity supply by 2030, as well as powering the global economy to a middle-income status by the same time horizon.

14. However, she cautioned that reaching these goals comes with its own set of challenges. It requires modernising energy infrastructure, accelerating energy access, securing sufficient funding, and managing the complexities of integrating renewable energy into current grid systems, which will be critical. In addition, she noted that socio-economic barriers that restrict access to modern, sustainable and renewable energy must be overcome to ensure that the transition is fair, just and leaves no one and no place behind.

15. She added further that Zimbabwe, as a member of the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA), launched during the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023 and co-ordinated by IRENA, would like to commend IRENA for successfully organising the stakeholder consultation workshop on APRA in Zimbabwe in January 2024. She noted that APRA can demonstrate how the deployment of renewables in Africa can be significantly accelerated by taking deliberate steps to develop innovative de-risking mechanisms, especially for APRA member countries.

16. She stated that Zimbabwe is committed to the Pledge made at COP28 of tripling renewable energy deployment and doubling of energy efficiency efforts by 2030. In addition to Zimbabwe's national Renewable Energy Policy, the national Energy Efficiency Policy and Clean Cooking Strategy have been completed and will guide the country in implementing the national Energy Pledge. The implementation of the pledge will go a long way in transforming Zimbabwe's economy and livelihoods of its people.

17. Dr Magombo acknowledged the support received from IRENA on technical assistance offered for Renewable Energy Zoning in the past as well as the currently running assessments on the deployment of decentralised renewables for powering agri-food chains and health sectors, under the Lives and Livelihood Initiative. She highlighted that Zimbabwe remains committed to co-host the Southern African Renewables Investment Forum. Furthermore, she announced that Zimbabwe will be hosting the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Sustainable Energy Week, in partnership with the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) in 2025.

18. As part of promoting private investments in renewable energy and addressing perceived risks in the sector, Dr Magombo informed that Zimbabwe developed a Government Project Support Agreement, which is accompanied with a standard Power Purchase Agreement with the utility, and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Letter of Undertaking for currency convertibility. Further initiatives include adoption of cost reflective tariffs and opening up the market for intensive energy users and intermediaries as off-takers.

19. Dr Magombo concluded by thanking the host, the Government of the UAE, represented by H.E. Dr Nawal Al Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA. She stated that the Government of the UAE has shown its ability and competence in successfully hosting key global events such as the Dubai EXPO, COP28, World Future Energy Summit, as well as the IRENA Council and Assembly meetings, among others, noting that Members are enjoying the usual UAE hospitality during the twenty-seventh IRENA Council and related meetings.

20. She also extended special thanks to the United States of America, represented by Mr Chris Davy, Director for Energy Transformation at the Department of State, who successfully chaired the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council and has handed over the chairmanship to Zimbabwe. She expressed appreciation for their continued support. She thanked the Director-General for IRENA, Mr Francesco La Camera, the Deputy Director-General, Ms Gauri Singh and the staff of the IRENA Secretariat for the preparations of the twenty-seventh Council meeting.

21. The Director-General in his opening remarks welcomed all participants to the twenty-seventh Council, highlighting that 300 delegates registered to attend the Council meeting representing 99 Members as well as 6 States in Accession and other United Nations Member States. He thanked the Membership for its steadfast support and engagement in IRENA's work as well as their commitment to the energy transition and trust in IRENA's work on policymaking. He announced that IRENA continues to grow – highlighting that Tanzania signed its instrument of ratification in March and will be joining IRENA as the 170<sup>th</sup> Member. He extended his sincere gratitude to the United States of America, represented by Mr Chris Davy, Director for Energy Transformation at the United States' Department of State and Panama, represented by H.E. Ms Rebeca Rebeca Pérez, Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, for their work and continuous leadership during the twenty-sixth Council meeting.

22. He welcomed Zimbabwe as Chair of the twenty-seventh Council, represented by Dr Gloria Magombo, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Energy and Power Development and Bangladesh as Vice-Chair, represented by H.E. Mr Mohammed Abu Zafar, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Bangladesh to the UAE. He assured them of the full support from the Secretariat during the Council meeting and beyond.

23. The Director-General highlighted that the key messages at the IRENA Assembly in April were clear, namely, the world is not on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C and the chances of reversing this trajectory are increasingly shrinking. The world does not have the luxury of delaying actions, searching for loopholes, or taking half measures. To ensure energy security, there is a need to look at the future energy system through a new lens and to re-imagine policies and skills and modernise and expand energy infrastructure. He further highlighted that access to affordable financing and partnerships is key.

24. The Director-General recalled that the UAE Consensus calls for tripling of renewables and doubling energy efficiency improvements by 2030, while also transitioning away from fossil fuels. He stated that this clarion call constitutes a clear strategy on the way forward – a just pathway to phase out fossil fuels, triple renewables and double energy efficiency by 2030. To realise the COP28 targets, the deployment of renewables must triple to reach 1,000 GW annually.

25. The Director-General informed that during the 2024 Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue in March, IRENA presented the WETO brief with the most recent findings and analysis on the status of efforts towards implementing the tripling goal, and stated that the news is not positive. While the world is on the right path towards a carbon free future, the speed and scale to realise it within the required timeframe are not at the level that they need to be.

26. He further informed that IRENA's flagship report, the World Energy Transitions Outlook (WETO) outlines a strategy for a successful outcome. The report positions electrification and energy efficiency at the forefront of the energy transition, enabled by renewables, clean hydrogen and sustainable biomass. Noteworthy was the fact that the intellectual basis and modelling behind the tripling renewable energy target was drawn directly from IRENA's WETO analysis.

27. The Director-General expressed that IRENA is pleased to have been designated by the COP28 Presidency as the Custodian Agency for tracking and reporting on this target, as well as on doubling energy efficiency improvements by 2030. He informed that a dedicated IRENA annual report will be providing key data and updates on the main metrics towards the realisation of the goals, and that the first edition of this report will be launched at the Pre-COP discussions in Azerbaijan in October 2024. He stated that IRENA will work closely with the incoming COP29 Presidency, Azerbaijan, to prepare the report, in continuation of the Agency's long-standing collaboration with COP Presidencies.

28. The Director-General emphasised that the successful realisation of these targets hinge, among others, on the implementation of credible plans, concrete policies, and strategies to get financial flows and enable a surge in climate ambition. He added that efforts must especially focus on the regions and communities that are most vulnerable and less likely to be the recipients of the necessary support needed, noting that less than 1.5% of the USD 2.8 trillion invested in renewable energy projects globally between 2000 and 2020 reached Sub-Saharan Africa – a region suffering from energy poverty and severe socio-economic challenges.

29. Highlighting that IRENA's project facilitation and capital mobilisation work through the Climate Investment Platform and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform have been yielding impressive results in a short period of time, the Director-General informed that by the end of 2023, ETAF alone had mobilised USD 4.05 billion in soft commitments from thirteen partners, already far exceeding the initial target of USD 1 billion. He added that when realised, the projects, with a capacity of 2,634 MW, can help catapult sustainable development – connecting thousands to clean power, creating clean jobs, improving living conditions and advancing equality. He informed that the programmatic discussions at the twenty-seventh Council meeting will provide Members with the chance to learn more about the progress achieved thus far, and facilitate guidance and feedback in this area of the Agency's work.

30. He noted that at COP29 in Azerbaijan, the international community will have a major opportunity to decide on ambitious targets on climate finance, and underlined the responsibility to enhance aspirations towards securing resources and making strong commitments that are crucial for transitioning to low-emissions and resilient economies. He informed that IRENA is supporting preparations to this end, and will also hold the first ever Investment Forum for Central Asia in Baku during first week of COP29.

31. The Director-General highlighted that the fate of all countries in the world is deeply intertwined, and what happens in one country can and does have an effect in another. In this regard, he stated that if the international community wants to keep climate change under control and ensure that the 1.5°C target becomes a reality, then the benefits of the energy transition should be reaped by everyone. He emphasised that the tools, policies and strategies to reach the goal exist, and that ambitions must stay high and urgent actions must be taken while there is still time. To this end, he expressed that he looks forward to the discussions on how to shift gears to accelerate action and deliver on our promises.

32. H.E. Mr Mohammed Abu Zafar, in his opening remarks, congratulated Zimbabwe on its election as Chair of the twenty-seventh meeting of the IRENA Council, and extended heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Chair, the United States of America, and Vice-Chair, Panama, for their outstanding work at the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council. He further expressed heartfelt gratitude, on behalf of the government of Bangladesh and on his own behalf, to all Council members for placing confidence in Bangladesh to work as the Vice-Chair of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council, expressing that Bangladesh is honoured to accept this role as Vice-Chair.

33. H.E. Mr Mohammed Abu Zafar underlined that Bangladesh, as one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world, always appreciates the work of IRENA and the greater cooperation amongst Members in realising the mandate of IRENA in promoting renewable energy in the Member States and helping them in their energy transitions. In this context, he stated that he looks forward to working closely with the Council and the broader Membership of IRENA towards fruitful deliberations during the twenty-seventh Council meeting.

**b. Adoption of the agenda (C/27/1)**

34. The Chair introduced the Provisional Agenda (C/27/L.1/Rev.1) and reminded the Council that a proposal was circulated to include an item entitled 'Establishment of the IRENA Liaison Office in Vienna' to the provisional Agenda of the twenty-seventh Council meeting. The Chair informed the Council that no objections were received regarding the inclusion of this item in the provisional agenda.

**35. The Council considered and adopted the Agenda, with the inclusion of the additional subject item under agenda item 10.**

**Agenda Item 3: Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2024-2025 (C/27/2, C/27/2/Add.1)**

36. The Director-General reflected on the Progress Report, stating that IRENA's *Renewable Capacity Statistics* report shows that global renewable power capacity amounted to 3,870 gigawatts at the end of 2023. He added that 83% of additions were renewables, with fossil and nuclear combined accounting for 14%. This development shows that in less than 10 years, the world put renewables at the forefront. He underlined that the renewables additions of 473 gigawatts of power capacity in one year is 20% more than the nuclear power added to-date. He then stressed that renewables are the only technology that may provide results in the time and the scale needed to fight climate change. The Director-General also explained that this unparalleled growth not only aligns with recent annual growth trends but goes beyond by setting a new standard in the deployment of renewable energy. This is a promising move signalling a significant shift toward embracing the benefit of renewable energy in alignment with IRENA's 1.5°C scenario.

37. The Director-General stated that despite this substantial improvement, advancements overall toward the net zero future remain inadequate. The world will remain considerably off the mark of the power capacity by 2030 target, that is critical to meet global climate and development goals. He added that navigating the old energy landscape is not easy. IRENA's analysis shows that achieving this goal is technically feasible and still economically viable. He emphasised that with six years to go, it is the world's collective responsibility to accelerate progress by enhancing the political will and adopting targeted policy in support of the energy transition.

38. Elaborating on the topic, he underscored that 11 terawatts (TW) of renewable capacity must be added by 2030, to achieve the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions suggested by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to be in line with the Paris Agreement goal. The Director-General underscored the uneven progress in terms of technology deployed and distribution across geographies. For example, Africa, the region with the greatest energy access needs and the lowest per capita capacity, continues to lag with less than three gigawatts of renewables added in the region in 2023. To achieve an equitable and just energy transition, he called for interrupting this pattern and recalibrating investment, ensuring that we reach the countries and communities most in need, including the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and Caribbean.

39. The Director-General underlined the need for systemic changes to realise the energy transition. He stated that the structural obstacles presented in developing and developed countries alike may differ in scale but require the same systemic approach, to speed up the transition and overcome the structural barriers. He stressed that it is widely recognised that renewables are the cleanest form of energy and the most cost effective, providing more units of a job per investment as well. It is also widely recognised that the decentralisation of the energy system is the best way to have a system that is ready to resist shocks and provide energy security.

40. To achieve resilience and energy security, he underlined the importance of adapting our infrastructure. To exemplify, he stated that the Nordic Sea and Baltic Sea in Europe have the potential to supply power to the whole continent, connecting also Greece, Italy and Portugal. Yet, the grid is not interconnected and flexible enough as of now. Africa, on the other hand is an important region for green hydrogen but does not have the infrastructure to distribute domestically, regionally or globally. He added that Europe's post-World War II reconstruction was made possible due to the concessional loans under the Marshall Plan and called for a similar plan for Africa, Southeast Asia and SIDS, focusing on infrastructure.

41. The Director-General underlined that the market for renewables is not the same as for fossil fuels, stressing the need for long-term contracts and adjusted market regulations. In the case of hydrogen, he stressed the lack of demand in Europe, and the importance of putting in place policies to create a market for it. Turning to subsidies, he underscored the existence of a significant amount of fossil fuel subsidies in the world, and the need to redirect them towards renewables for the energy transition. He also highlighted the urgent need to cultivate skills and institutional capacities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to manage centralised energy systems, which although better, require the use and balancing of sophisticated technologies. For instance, he referred to IRENA's recommendation of 1 to 2 megawatts of storage for any 10 megawatts of new energy in the grid for the G7, which is critical but also more complex.

42. In concluding, the Director-General underscored the importance of securing finance, especially in view of COP29. He stressed the needed reform of multilateral financial institutions to increase inclusivity in the decision-making process, and the need for more loans and grants. He continued on the importance of strengthening infrastructure capacity and linking development to building the new energy system. To achieve this, he proposed directing 2-3% of the financial assets around the world, which is more than USD 150 trillion, to the right direction, and reiterated that IRENA's Utilities for Net Zero Alliance (UNEZA) will collaborate with and push financial institutions to move in this direction as well.

43. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director, Country Engagement and Partnerships (CEP) provided an update on IRENA's country engagement and partnerships work developed to facilitate the implementation of the tripling renewables commitment. He reiterated that tripling the global renewable energy capacity by 2030 is an outcome of IRENA's World Energy Transitions Outlook analysis to keep in track with the Paris Agreement goals. The COP 28 tripling commitment built on IRENA's close collaboration with G7 and G20 Presidencies that acknowledge IRENA's analysis. Mr Gonul stressed that it was the product of hard work over the past year, both on the analytical side, but also through extensive country engagement and outreach undertaken in cooperation with like-minded partners.

44. Mr Gonul underlined that in leading up to COP 28, IRENA together with the UAE Presidency, EU Commission and other supporting partners, carried out a series of regional consultative meetings in Asia Pacific, MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and SIDS. A dedicated session also took place on the sidelines of the 26<sup>th</sup> IRENA Council to provide a detailed explanation on the rationale, methodology, and process for the tripling target, followed up with

further consultations at the country level. Mr Gonul reiterated IRENA's excitement to see the collective efforts bear fruit with the adoption of the UAE consensus that set a new specific target on tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030. Crucially, the related global pledge was endorsed by 133 parties to the UNFCCC.

45. Mr Gonul stressed that the most important next step is to implement and translate this strong political message into concrete action on-the-ground. IRENA will have a central role in the process, as the COP28 President tasked it to be a custodian agency by monitoring progress and providing strategic recommendations to achieve the targets outlined in the UAE consensus. He informed participants that IRENA's role was also recently acknowledged by the G7. Accordingly, IRENA will monitor and report on the progress this year in reaching collective contributions to the goal, and annually thereafter. He added that the 2024 edition of the report will be published in cooperation with the UAE, as COP28 President, and Azerbaijan, as COP29 President-Designate, and presented in an event at Pre-COP29. Mr Gonul explained that the 2024 and 2025 editions will be pilot tools for driving the implementation and IRENA will work with Members to ensure that this work informs the ongoing NDC update process and is reflected in the third generation of NDCs.

46. Regarding the NDCs, Mr Gonul stated that one good example of IRENA's ongoing support to raise ambition in their energy component is the alignment of NDCs with ambitiously set national energy and climate plans in Southeast European countries. IRENA has already completed the work in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is now working in Georgia and Moldova in this respect. As in the previous round, IRENA will continue supporting the implementation of NDCs as well. He reminded participants that IRENA supported 72 countries through more than 140 activities during the previous round of NDC updates in 2020 and 2021. He added that for this purpose, IRENA made available a set of country support work packages relying on extensive in-house knowledge and capabilities to support Members on a wide range of technology, policy and finance topics such as energy data, long term planning, policies and finance, assessment and roadmaps, technology and innovation, and project facilitation.

47. Mr Gonul added that to stimulate strong implementation on-the-ground, IRENA relies on extensive partnership frameworks with UN organisations, complimented with strong global outreach and convening as well as various regional platforms, including Investment Forums that IRENA will be organising over the year. In closing, he emphasised the importance of fully bringing in the industry and private sector through IRENA's multistakeholder platforms and engagement with the Global Renewables Alliance.

48. Mr Raul Alfaro-Pelico, Director, Knowledge Policy and Finance Centre (KPFC) focused on how IRENA is supporting policymakers through knowledge. He underlined that achieving the tripling target requires an integrated approach on what the Agency offers. Underpinning that work is data, such as IRENA's statistics on renewable energy generation, capacity, costs and finance, that are widely used and cited.

49. Mr Alfaro-Pelico underlined that across deployment cost and financing, there is a positive trajectory with records being broken. However, the world is not yet on track to achieve the tripling target or SDG7. As the leading intergovernmental organisation mandated to accelerate the deployment of renewables, IRENA will continuously strengthen efforts to provide high quality, timely, and freely accessible data to its 169 Members and growing. The international community can build on the cutting-edge analysis that the Agency has provided for 15 years running. To bolster IRENA's role as the Centre of Excellence and the Global Voice for Renewables, IRENA focuses on how to adapt policies and infrastructure for renewables, across regions and sectors.

50. Mr Alfaro-Pelico stressed the two key priorities, namely, scaling up financing and strengthening international collaboration. He reiterated that the energy transition will only happen with sufficient resources. IRENA's policy and market analysis tackles existing and emerging policy market and regulatory risks, and the Agency is currently focusing on supply chain risks by analysing instruments like auctions, as well as mitigating social and environmental risks by evaluating measures to ensure that renewable energy projects are sustainable. This body of work informs the Agency's advice and capacity building efforts for Members. IRENA's Global Atlas for Renewable Energy Initiative continues to assist policy makers, project developers, investors, and the global community by providing data, online tools, and technical assistance to map investment opportunities for the deployment of renewable projects, reduce investment risks, and increase access to capital. Mr Alfaro-Pelico underscored that these services have provided concrete support in accelerating project deployment, and that they have been in high demand. Building on strong partnerships in this regard is an integral method of IRENA's work.

51. On de-risking, IRENA works with partners, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), SE4ALL, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and others under the umbrella of the Sustainable Risk Mitigation Initiative on developing innovative risk mitigation solutions and providing tailored advice and capacity building for project implementation in developing countries. Mr Alfaro-Pelico reiterated the concept that the energy transition is not solely about deployment policies but about delivering for people – how benefits and burdens are distributed, focusing on those with the greatest needs, including countries with high deficits. In this respect, he highlighted that as part of IRENA's holistic approach, the Agency will continue to cover topics relevant to just energy transitions including renewable energy supply chains, workforce development, leveraging local capacities for various renewable energy technologies, energy access, including clean cooking solutions, quality job creation, greater participation by women in the renewables workforce, as well as community benefits. He concluded by stressing that the Collaborative Framework for Just and Inclusive Energy Transition, as well as the Coalition for Action, provide useful platforms for multistakeholder coordination and action.

52. Mr Roland Roesch, Director, IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC) focused his presentation on showcasing how IRENA is implementing the tripling mandate. He explained that the Agency is tracking the progress and capacity additions, share in power generation, and progress in energy efficiency against the tripling goal. IRENA provides a detailed assessment of where the world is on track and where progress is lagging by closely collaborating with Members and partners on aligning NDCs with the tripling goal, thereby fostering economic growth, energy security, and a fair and just energy transition.

53. Mr Roesch added that IRENA engages with stakeholders to refine renewable energy strategies and facilitate collaboration amongst COP and the COP Parties. He stated that IRENA supports countries in raising awareness and revising energy plans and NDCs, to achieve the tripling goal and promote renewable energy development, aligned with the 1.5°C scenario to achieve global climate targets as well to foster economic growth, enhance energy security and social justice. Mr Roesch stressed that by working continuously with multilateral fora such as the G7 and G20, IRENA supports the Membership in achieving realistic, tangible outcomes through integrated planning, advice on the systemic decarbonisation of end-uses, and local value creation for just energy transition.

54. He emphasised the importance of affordable finance and evenly spread investments, highlighting IRENA's work with previous and current G20 Presidencies to present instruments to

de risk-investment, make finance affordable, and thereby open ways to global, more evenly spread investments in renewables.

55. Mr Roesch elaborated on IRENA's key activities on infrastructure in the Mediterranean, namely on innovation in hard-to-abate sectors, as well as planning and capacity building, that address the most pressing issues related to the COP28 outcome. He also emphasised the work on the Med-Iraq project, where IRENA is currently supporting the European Union and the Mediterranean countries to deliver increased supply and mutual beneficial trade of green electrons and green hydrogen molecules, as well as develop more resilient regional clean technology manufacturing in the region. Development and investment needs of the set necessary infrastructure and the development of skills are the key requirements of this project.

56. Mr Roesch concluded by discussing the Collaborative Frameworks - platforms for knowledge exchange and building resilient networks. He informed Members that the next Collaborative Framework meeting on Green Hydrogen would take place on October-November 2024, whereas the meeting of the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower would convene on July-August 2024.

57. Mr Ahmed Badr, Director, Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) discussed how IRENA is capitalising on its knowledge base to bring projects into reality. He elaborated on the work under ETAF, stressing the need for financing and bankable projects. To achieve this, there are two challenges that developing countries face - the cost of capital and the development cost. He stressed that through the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform (ETAF), IRENA manages the development of bankable projects, noting the USD 4.05 billion that has already been mobilised. He also stated that ETAF comprises thirteen partners - soon increasing to fifteen - and 64 projects, with 15 projects already introduced to partners. Mr Badr gave a breakdown of the financing partners, explaining that USD 1 billion was offered by the UAE through the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, First Development Bank and MASDAR; USD 1 billion came from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank, and USD 1 billion came from EBRD. He added that the remaining USD 1 billion originated from the Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Islamic Development Bank, including the investment arm.

58. Mr Badr stated that together with MASDAR and AIB, IRENA closed 900 megawatts last year, and that it currently has, in the pipeline, projects of about 2,500 megawatts and another three reaching 4,000 megawatts. He also clarified that small scale projects mainly come through the Climate Investment Platform (CIP), although this is not by design but based on country requests. Both CIP and ETAF work is demand-driven, with developers and Members deciding which one to go for. Mr Badr stressed that CIP includes more than 400 projects and has financially closed projects of about 65 megawatts, with more than USD 80 million in value. He added that till the end of the year, there is not an expectation to significantly increase the number of financially closed projects.

59. Mr Badr then turned to the work on key initiatives such as the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA) - launched last year in Kenya, with IRENA acting as Secretariat. Through this initiative, IRENA is supporting seven countries, namely Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. In this context, IRENA has held several consultations – the last one being in Ethiopia the week prior – gaining projects of more than 5,000 megawatts in wind, solar, hydropower, and other technologies in these seven countries. Mr Badr then informed that IRENA would convene the APRA Investment Forum on 1-5 September 2024 in Kenya, whereas another Investment Forum will be held in Azerbaijan during COP29.

60. In conclusion, Mr Badr underlined that IRENA does not endeavour to increase the number of partners in the ETAF per se, but to create strategic partnerships to help the Agency innovate on the way projects are sourced. He brought the example of Africa50 that not only finances projects in Africa, but also project development, representing several financial institutions, which could increase the strength and reach of ETAF. Similarly, IRENA is working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – a partner engaged in sustainable aviation fuels projects – thus aiming to have a significant impact on the de-carbonisation efforts of the air transport industry.

61. The Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), El Salvador, represented by H.E. Ms Vanessa Interiano, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to IRENA and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 12 June 2024, as contained in document C/27/CRP/1.

62. The PSC Chair reported that the Committee congratulated IRENA for producing outstanding work and progressing with the delivery of the current Work Programme and Budget. She added that the Committee congratulated IRENA for its engagement with the Group of 7 and the Group of 20 as well as emphasised IRENA's strong role and influence in COP settings, in particular on the adoption of the tripling goal, emphasising the importance of assisting countries into translating it in national plans.

63. The PSC Chair then reported that a participant highlighted IRENA's activities in SIDS, while participants also discussed the current work of SIDS on developing a monitoring and evaluating system.

64. The PSC Chair relayed that the Committee commended IRENA's work on project facilitation and resource mobilisation, especially under the ETAF platform, and that a participant expressed hope that more partners would join the Platform.

65. Furthermore, the PSC Chair stated that the Secretariat informed on the progress in developing the Renewable Energy Transition Outlook for South America. The analysis for the demand scenario is almost finalised, whereas the power sector analysis will be concluded in the next two months. The goal is to have the report ready for peer review by early 2025, and the Secretariat intends to deliver on updating the report on auctions, considering the issue of non-pricing criteria.

66. The PSC Chair touched upon items that the Secretariat should follow up on. For example, regarding SIDS within the G7 and G20 context, the Secretariat should promote IRENA's work through various communications means. In addition, to support SIDS in the process of developing its monitoring and evaluation system, the Secretariat should provide further information on the impact of the activities undertaken in SIDS through existing initiatives. The PSC Chair mentioned that to efficiently conduct the project facilitation work, considering the limited resources allocated to it, the Secretariat should provide clarifications on this issue.

67. Moreover, the PSC Chair explained that to ensure ETAF funds reach the most vulnerable countries and regions, IRENA should list in the progress report the work undertaken in vulnerable countries, highlighting for each country the renewable energy potential of the project, the status, and next steps, including when implementation is expected. The Agency's analytical and project facilitation work would also aim to inform and support each other through documentation prepared on project facilitation under CIP.

68. The PSC Chair also referred to discussions under any other business, stressing that the Committee proposed to hold a virtual second informal PSC meeting in late August or early

September, to cover upcoming issues on the agenda for the regular PSC meeting, scheduled to take place at the margins of the twenty-eighth Council. The meeting would also allow PSC members, and other interested Members, to strategically discuss issues planned for the rest of the biennium, as well as outcomes and mandates from the twenty-seventh Council meeting. The PSC Chair thus invited Committee members and the wider Membership to share their input on the specific issues to be included in the agenda of the PSC informal meeting.

69. The PSC Chair also informed that regarding the Director-General's call to increase IRENA's budget, the UAE commented that the creation of the Project Facilitation and Support Division is evidence of structural changes and an increase in resources allocated to the Agency. The UAE also called for clarifications on how the distribution of the funds is managed, and referring to the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, called for using the lessons learned from this exercise to inform ETAF's work. The PSC Chair relayed the Secretariat's reply that the majority of countries' requests relate to project facilitation work, yet the budget has not increased since 2017.

70. The PSC Chair informed that UAE also stated that the voluntary contribution provided in support of communications in 2018 had not been fully utilised, thus, this is not only an issue of availability of resources, but also about strategizing and prioritisation. The UAE then encouraged IRENA to self-reflect and offered to review and provide recommendations on the communications strategy, and the Secretariat committed to work with the UAE to find solutions.

71. The Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC), Tonga, represented by H.E. Mr 'Akau'ola, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Tonga to the UAE, presented the deliberations of the Committee meeting held on 12 June 2024 with regard to the outcome of the meeting of the Open-Ended Group on the Budget, as contained in document C/27/CRP/2.

72. The AFC Chair informed that during the Open-Ended Group on Budget as well as the AFC meeting, delegations took the opportunity to express views on several aspects of the budget. He reported that a view was expressed by one delegation that IRENA's Work Programme requires more details of the individual program or initiative. The delegation expressed its view that IRENA has the flexibility to select programs and initiatives based on the best outcomes to serve the Work Programme within the given budget, while ensuring that the workload should not overwhelm existing staff, and called for a better understanding of what could be done with the current approved Work Programme and Budget, without staff being compromised.

73. The AFC Chair informed that clarifications were provided by the Secretariat on the process of the consideration by the Membership of any supplementary budget, should there be agreement. The Secretariat also provided relevant Financial Regulations and Rules, and Financial Procedures of the Agency in this regard.

74. With regard to an inquiry by a delegation on a timeline for the implementing of the Results-Based Framework (RBF) and transitioning to Results-Based Budgeting, the AFC Chair reported that the Secretariat explained that the shift to the RBF is a gradual process, and that the Agency is continuing to develop the framework, including establishment of desired outcomes, deliverables, appropriate indicators, and baselines.

75. The AFC Chair informed that one delegation expressed appreciation for the extensive list of cost-saving measures, and further clarification was requested on cost-saving efforts in human resources, including staff reaching tenure limitations, separation costs, repatriation grants, and annual leave accrual. The Secretariat confirmed that these costs were not included in the 2024-2025 budget, and that absorption of these costs will thus be achieved through staggered

recruitment or replacement processes while meeting upcoming commitments for separating staff. He stated that the Secretariat further confirmed that the cost of re-hiring former employees would be no different to hiring new staff.

76. The AFC Chair reported that the work on revising the travel policy was welcomed, and that one delegation also emphasised the need for a thorough assessment of staff profiles, seniority, and number of staff traveling on missions. The Secretariat informed that the Agency is committed to reducing the number of travellers attending events, and recognises the need for ongoing improvements in travel policies.

77. The AFC Chair informed that one delegation expressed views on the effectiveness and achievements of partnerships in place, and requested for more refined information to be provided to the Assembly and the Council on their effectiveness and benefits. He stated that the Secretariat highlighted that there are 100 active partnership agreements, and delegations were encouraged to refer to the Progress Report for more information. He informed that the Secretariat further committed to sharing the feedback raised in the meeting with the relevant teams.

78. The AFC Chair reported that the shift of Service Contract holders to General Service staff, as well as the engagement of consultants was also discussed, and that suggestions were made for recruiting talent from governments and universities instead of consultants. He further reported that a preference was expressed to conduct programmatic work with regular staff. In this regard, the Secretariat highlighted that the Agency would welcome qualified staff from Members, funded through voluntary contributions to IRENA or through loan or secondment agreements paid by loaning entities.

79. The AFC Chair informed that one delegation highlighted that the UAE salary scales are higher than the ICSC scales, and in addition, the United Arab Emirates provides a housing allowance for Professional staff. He further informed that the Secretariat highlighted that the proposed budget of USD 2.3 million for staff-related increases was not approved, and only USD 0.3 million of this amount was related to the General Service staff salary survey increases – with the remaining USD 2 million covering statutory increases, such as post increments, dependency status changes, and medical insurance adjustments – and that the Agency is currently facing challenges in absorbing these increases, in addition to the recent increases of General Service staff salaries, within the approved budget.

80. The AFC Chair reported that further clarification on General Service staff salaries in Abu Dhabi, and the budget implications of staff-related increases were provided by the Secretariat. He further reported that the Secretariat updated the information in the presentation, on the slide containing the estimated unbudgeted amounts emanating from the General Service salary increases as approved by the ICSC as well as the number of General Service staff in Abu Dhabi, and relayed that the presented numbers included the most conservative scenario, representing administrative staff with General Service contracts.

81. With regard to a view expressed by one delegation on IRENA's current structure, and potential restructuring to avoid top-heavy management and better allocate resources, the AFC Chair informed that the Secretariat noted that IRENA's work programmes, structures and budgets have been developed with Members, and agreed to relay the feedback internally.

82. The AFC Chair reported that one delegation emphasised that IRENA should remain focused on its core mission of promoting widespread renewable energy adoption, and that the delegation also suggested that IRENA should prioritise the implementation of its Medium-term Strategy more efficiently, given the increasing discussions and topics on renewable energy, by favouring

regions with high potential and rapid development in renewable energy for project facilitation and human resources. The AFC Chair added that the delegation further highlighted concerns about the necessity and implications of a budget increase, with a focus on understanding the potential impacts on the Work Programme and exploring alternative options.

83. The AFC Chair summarised that the Open-Ended Group on the Budget resulted in more questions to the Secretariat, to which responses were provided, but there were no indications regarding a supplementary budget at this point in time. For this reason, he proposed that the Membership continues to discuss this issue under the Progress Report and Annual Report during Council deliberations, as needed.

84. Delegations welcomed the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2024-2025. One delegation recommended that IRENA focus on the core mission of promoting the expansion of renewable energy, including efficiency, in support of Members.

85. One delegation called on IRENA to promote coordination and synergies in its work to ensure the analysis informs policymaking and building of project pipelines and investment mobilisation, whereas creating a feedback loop with the work of individual countries determining which areas of work require further analysis. Another delegation requested an update on the implementation of the recently adopted results-based framework, and reporting.

86. One delegation welcomed the *Geopolitics of the energy transition: Energy security* report and underlined the importance of the analysis for the energy transition and tackling energy security issues, the climate crisis, and geopolitical risks in an integrated manner.

87. Some delegations underscored that climate change is one of the greatest threats the world faces on social, economic and environmental levels, while the rapidly growing energy demand requires reliable and affordable energy supplies that are competitive in the global energy market. One delegation underlined that there are various pathways to energy transition.

88. Delegations underlined that the COP28 outcome – based on IRENA’s analysis – has given the Agency a more prominent role at the global level and positioned it as the world's thought leader and global expert on both renewable energy and energy transition. Some delegations thanked IRENA for providing inputs to the work of the G7 and G20 that also fed into the COP28 outcome.

89. Delegations congratulated IRENA on being tasked with delivering annual reports on monitoring progress and providing recommendations on the achievement of the COP28 targets. Some delegations encouraged IRENA to swiftly deliver the first edition of the annual report and ensure it receives the necessary visibility.

90. Delegations congratulated IRENA for collaborating closely with the upcoming COP29 Presidency on monitoring the COP28 outcome. Some delegations underlined the key role IRENA could play at COP29 and called on the Secretariat to keep Members abreast of preparations on the run up to the meeting.

91. One delegation called on IRENA to continue providing active assistance, particularly for developing countries, on the run up to the important milestone of the third generation of Nationally Determined Contributions in 2025.

92. One delegation (written statement available [here](#)) urged IRENA to regain momentum regarding the critical work undertaken on promoting clean cooking, in the context of the Lives and Livelihoods initiative and beyond, and increase its visibility.

93. Delegations welcomed the work undertaken under the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform and the Climate Investment Platform to help countries secure inflows of finance to develop supply chains, markets and infrastructure for the energy transition.

94. Some delegations encouraged IRENA to dedicate its efforts and work on countries that are most in need in securing resources. One delegation proposed the creation of a facility for risk mitigation mechanism for Africa hosted by IRENA.

95. One delegation called on IRENA to organise a webinar on the ETAF work and process for the benefit of Pacific and Caribbean Islands, including a clarification on the timeframe of projects, from submission to finalisation. One delegation requested information on how ETAF would benefit small countries in particular.

96. One delegation requested IRENA to list in the Progress Reports the work undertaken in vulnerable countries under ETAF, highlighting for each country the renewable energy potential for the project, the status of next steps, including the implementation that is expected.

97. One delegation requested further information on the implementation and overall governance of the proposed Renewables Acceleration Fund.

**98. The Council took note of the Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2024-2025, contained in document C/27/2 and the Work Programme 2024-2025 – Implementation Matrix, contained in document C/27/2/Add.1, as well as the reports of the Collaborative Frameworks, and the contributions of Members on the issues.**

**99. The Council took note of the report of the Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee, contained in document C/27/CRP/1, and the agreed actions contained therein for follow up, as well as the interventions of Members.**

**100. The Council took note of the report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, contained in document C/27/CRP/2, including the oral report by the AFC Chair on the outcome of the meeting of the Open-Ended Group on the Budget, as well as the interventions by Members on the matter.**

**101. Based on the proposal of the Facilitator of the Open-Ended Group on the Budget, the Council agreed to continue the discussions on the budgetary issues under the Progress Report and Annual Report during the Council deliberations, as needed, keeping in mind the preliminary report and response from the Director-General on the need to bring to conclusion this matter to allow for and facilitate efficient operation of the Agency.**

#### **Agenda Item 4: General Member Statements – National Experiences on the Energy Transition**

102. The Chair invited Members to share their experiences on priority actions and challenges related to the deployment of renewable energy, and exchange views on issues related to the energy transition in the coming decade and beyond. She also invited Members to provide their statements in written form, in the original language of delivery, to be annexed to the Summary Report of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council. These statements are contained in Annex 1.

103. Delegations extended gratitude to IRENA for its unwavering commitment to advancing renewable energy solutions and a just energy transition worldwide, and reiterated their willingness to continue collaborating with the Agency to this end.

104. Several delegations underlined that renewable energy is critical for achieving sustainable development, combatting climate change, and ensuring energy security. One delegation mentioned the efforts to identify opportunities to improve the quality and consistency of benefits that Indigenous communities receive from natural resources projects, including renewable energy. Another delegation stressed the national schemes to create an enabling environment through government investment in skills and training, research and education.

105. Delegations discussed the national strategies and targets set to increase the share of renewables in their national energy mix and achieve carbon neutrality.

106. Delegations also further elaborated on their policies to sustainably promote the use of solar, hydropower, onshore and offshore wind energy, geothermal, biomass, green hydrogen, critical minerals, e-mobility, energy storage, heat pumps and energy efficiency as well as nuclear power.

107. Some delegations detailed their policies to achieve universal access to energy and clean cooking. Some delegations reiterated the significance of upgrading energy infrastructure as well as expanding grids and interconnectivity domestically and regionally.

108. Delegations also discussed their national policies to create a conducive environment to attract investments and facilitate overall improvement in their regulatory frameworks, to strengthen the structure of renewables markets.

109. One delegation underlined the need to refocus financing towards the energy transition with transparent frameworks and robust risk assessment and mitigation schemes through an inclusive and effective approach, complemented by capacity building, and continuous social dialogue.

110. Delegations highlighted the power of multilateralism and partnerships, knowledge exchange, and innovation, to achieve economic growth, energy security and a net zero future.

111. Some delegations highlighted the vast renewable energy resources of the African continent that hold immense potential for sustainable development and realising global energy security and climate goals, and underlined IRENA's role in supporting efforts in the region.

112. Delegations lauded the Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA) and expressed that they look forward to the upcoming Investment Forum in Nairobi, Kenya.

113. Some delegations invited IRENA to collaborate further to enhance the decarbonisation of SIDS. One delegation highlighted the unique challenges faced by Small Island Developing States and praised IRENA's SIDS Lighthouses initiative as a perfect example of collaboration among States with similar circumstances, with sharing of knowledge and support towards the renewable energy transition.

114. One delegation mentioned the upcoming meeting of the MED9 countries in Larnaca, Cyprus on 23 September 2024, to present a comprehensive study by the European Commission and IRENA on exploring the Mediterranean region's potential as a green energy corridor with neighbouring countries from Africa and the Middle East.

115. Delegations stressed the significance of the COP28 outcome on setting the goals of tripling renewables and doubling energy efficiency and addressing fossil fuels – the main cause of climate change.

116. Delegations welcomed the appointment of IRENA as the custodian agency for tracking progress toward the goal of the historic COP 28 consensus, which is a clear reflection of IRENA's leadership in advancing the global conversation on the imperative to rapidly deploy renewables to achieve the energy transition.

117. Delegations underlined the urgent need to bring the ambitions of the COP28 outcome to life, emphasising that IRENA is uniquely positioned to play a key role in the follow-up. One delegation encouraged IRENA to set out clearly the objectives and scope of its role and work with other international organisations and governments in this context.

118. Delegations highlighted that Members must actively act to implement the COP28 consensus by accelerating the energy transition away from fossil fuels, ensuring that the revised NDCs reflect the outcome of the Global Stocktake, utilising lessons learned from platforms and initiatives.

119. One delegation expressed appreciation for the continued collaboration with IRENA in the context of the Power Breakthrough Agenda towards an accelerated global renewable energy transition.

120. Delegations called on IRENA to assist countries in revising their NDCs.

121. One delegation requested IRENA to act as a bridge and facilitator, securing co-financing for national energy projects and accessing new and innovative technologies. Another delegation underscored the importance of harmonising regulatory frameworks across regions as well as securing the availability and accessibility of financing mechanisms to support the deployment of renewable energy technologies.

122. One delegation referred to the Investment Forum for Latin America and the Energy Week for the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) that took place in Montevideo last year, enforcing the importance of Latin America as a very relevant player in the regional energy transition.

123. One delegation referred to the Singapore-IRENA High-Level Forum to be held on 22 October 2024, in the margins of the 17<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Energy Week.

124. One delegation mentioned that from 4 to 6 September 2024, the Republic of Korea will host the second World Climate Industry Expo to be convened in Busan, under the theme of ushering in a carbon-free energy era with climate technologies.

125. Some delegations reiterated their support for Ukraine's nomination for President of the 15<sup>th</sup> IRENA Assembly. The delegations also requested for the four objecting countries to submit a clarification on their vote and for the consultation process to continue, with one delegation further stating that "these statements should be delivered no later than the next meeting of the Bureau" and "that the Bureau then share them promptly with all Members". One delegation expressed disagreement with the proposal, calling for refraining from politicising the work of international organisations.

126. **The Council took note of the experiences shared by Members.**

**Agenda Item 5: Programmatic discussion on Scaling and Speeding Up Investment on Renewables (C/27/BN/1)**

127. The Deputy Director-General commenced by introducing Abu Dhabi Fund for Development's (ADFD) partnership with IRENA and its successful mobilisation of USD 350 million to 32 renewable energy projects in 24 countries. Highlighting the Climate Investment Platform (CIP) and its goal to increase capital mobilisation and renewable energy in developing countries, the Deputy Director-General provided an overview of CIP's project proponents, with technical assistance and matchmaking with 90 financial institutions. She further highlighted the five successful projects facilitated by CIP in Albania, Benin, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nigeria, mobilising over USD 85 million for 65 MW in installed capacity.

128. The Deputy Director-General provided an introduction to the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform (ETAF) and its goal to advance the global energy transition with a fixed number of pledging USD 4 billion for projects, highlighting ETAF's mobilisation of USD 1 billion for 900 MW, for 3 different projects in Uzbekistan. The Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA) was also outlined, with the goal to mobilise finance, engage the private sector, and provide technical assistance and capacity building catered to national plans.

129. Mr Ahmed Badr, Director of Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) Division in his [presentation](#), provided an update on the progress of the ETAF platform and the CIP, including project financing interventions, highlighting the three projects benefiting five million inhabitants in Uzbekistan through solar PV. Mr Badr also mentioned CIP's receipt of 280 project proposals, with the majority not being ready enough for funding. Mr Badr highlighted successful Investment Forums and capacity building workshops held in the Pacific and Africa, and noted that these efforts emphasise the importance of infrastructure readiness and collaboration among various stakeholders, including government entities and private sector developers for financial closure and to ensure project viability.

130. Mr Badr affirmed that IRENA aims to enhance communication and awareness among Members regarding the benefits and processes of ETAF and CIP, with the focus being on addressing the challenges faced by developing countries in terms of project development, cost of capital, and financing mechanisms. It was made clear by Mr Badr that IRENA's role is not a bank but as a facilitator, leveraging its technical expertise and partnerships to support sustainable energy projects worldwide.

131. The results of the last Investment Forum held in November 2023 in the Latin American Region (Uruguay) were presented by Mr Badr, along with the 2024 pre-COP 29 road map, focusing on APRA as well as the upcoming Investment Forums in Africa and Central Asia.

132. A delegation stated that a proposal for a clear and transparent financial mechanism needs to be established to ensure effectiveness for project support. The Delegation also requested clarification on the governance model and the process that is undertaken for the selection of partners for the ETAF.

133. A delegation stated that Members are welcome and encouraged to learn about the Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) division, and the kind of technical support the division could provide with regard to developing projects. The delegation also stated that more information with regard to the PFS is always warranted, and recommended for Members to be familiar and up to date with the help the division can offer to Members.

134. A delegation stated that it has a readiness system implemented for scaling and investing in renewables, and informed that it began its road to transitioning to clean energy by mobilising USD 10 billion dedicated to clean energy transition.

135. A delegation expressed the need for more clarity on financial mechanisms, wanting to know what financial mechanisms are being used and what governance models are being utilised.

136. A delegation enquired about the kind of help IRENA could offer its Members in terms of scaling and speeding up investments on renewables, and if regulatory support is being provided.

137. A delegation strongly suggested that the move for equitable distribution of the funds available to all developing regions.

138. A delegation remarked that there are many bankable projects in the island that are worth looking at, and that ETAF should be reaching the most vulnerable regions for support. They recommended that a webinar on ETAF dedicated for pacific SIDS should be done to clarify how support is offered.

139. A delegation expressed interest towards ETAF and mentioned that it is keen on collaborating with ETAF to supporting projects. It stated that their projects are also bankable, and that it is just a matter of scale. The delegation expressed that there is a lack of understanding present with regards to how ETAF best works for Members. The delegation agreed that a workshop for the pacific for deeper understanding is highly encouraged.

140. In response to the interventions, Mr Badr emphasised that it is important to note that IRENA manages pipelines and not funds. From the projects side, the criteria is simple and based on the project having its output in line with its country's NDCs, having SDGs and contributing to clean energy.

141. In response to what financial model is being utilised, Mr Badr clarified that one financial model templated is being under development, and that is loans are being provided. It was also noted that 13 banks are working following their own board, with each bank having their own steering committee, and that local funding, to be established through Africa50, is under consideration. The ROAT (Road on Operate and Transfer) was also announced as a new financial model implemented that will provide more opportunities for derisking investments on Renewables. Mr Badr further clarified that standardized Project Information Documents have been done for projects in Member countries, which assisted them in attracting funding for their projects

142. **The Council considered and took note of the presentation and interventions made.**

#### **Agenda Item 6: Programmatic discussion on Derisking investments toward realizing SDG 7 (C/27/BN/2)**

143. The Director-General introduced the topic by noting that the 2024 edition of the *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report* had just been published, highlighting that 685 million people still lacked access to electricity and 2.1 billion people relied on polluting cooking fuels. Despite significant renewable energy deployment over the past decade, achieving SDG 7 remains far from complete. He emphasised the urgent need to address the finance gap, as emerging markets and developing economies, excluding Brazil, China, and India, received only 10% of the USD 2 trillion invested in energy transition in 2023. The Director-General called for increased public financing

and innovative de-risking mechanisms to support renewable energy projects in developing countries, and invited Members to share their experiences and insights on the topic.

144. Mr Raul Alfaro-Pelico, Director, Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre (KPFC), in his [scene-setting presentation](#) highlighted that despite significant progress in SDG 7, finance remains a major bottleneck. USD 150 trillion in cumulative investments is required to meet the 1.5°C target by 2050, averaging USD 5.3 trillion per year. He emphasised that current investment levels, at less than half of that amount, are insufficient to achieve the SDGs and the target to triple renewable energy deployment by 2030. He noted that while global investment in energy transition technologies reached another record, exceeding USD 2 trillion in 2023, it is unevenly distributed, with developing countries receiving a small fraction. Continued significant investment in fossil fuels also impedes progress. Mr Alfaro-Pelico pointed out that achieving the necessary renewable energy deployment by 2030 requires annual additions of 1.2 terawatts, but countries' commitments in their NDCs fall short of what is required to achieve the tripling pledge. He called for increased public funds, the need to transform development finance, and shifting the conversation from mere bankability to broader impact potential to address the finance gap.

145. Mr Alfaro-Pelico then discussed IRENA's comprehensive de-risking approach, emphasising the need for both policy and financial de-risking to attract investments and achieve a just and inclusive energy transition. This framework underscores IRENA's body of work to de-risk renewable energy investments, including analytical products and tailored capacity building services to address various risks faced by investors, developers, communities, governments, and other stakeholders throughout the value chain. For instance, IRENA tackles resource risks through data collection and quality assurance through the Global Atlas for Renewable Energy initiative and Renewables Readiness Assessments. IRENA also addresses policy, market and regulatory risks through comprehensive policy and market analyses, which forms the basis of the Agency's advice and capacity building for Members. In addition, IRENA supports its Members in addressing supply chain risks by analysing the design of instruments tailored for that purpose (e.g. auctions), along with the needed industrial policy for localising value chains. The Agency's services also cover overarching issues such as labour risks, skill shortages, and social and environmental risks.

146. The Vice-Chair of the Council, H.E. Mohammed Abu Zafar, opened the floor for interventions on the topic. Delegations expressed their shared concern to mitigate investment risks in renewable energy projects to achieve SDG 7 targets and other climate goals effectively, and highlighted specific barriers and proposed solutions to enhance investment flows into sustainable energy solutions.

147. Delegations emphasised the need to enhance access to finance for renewable energy projects, particularly in developing countries. Delegations identified issues such as high costs of technology, limited access to concessional resources, high perceived risks, political instability, macroeconomic and fiscal constraints, and regulatory uncertainty as major impediments to attracting private sector investment in renewable energy. In the case of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), their geographic isolation and the tendency for investors to prefer larger-scale projects prove to be unique challenges that hinder tailored, small-scale renewable energy investments needed by SIDS.

148. Delegations shared examples of existing interventions to de-risk renewable energy investments at the national and international levels. At the national level, delegations stressed the importance of clear, long-term policy frameworks, streamlined procedures for project development, and a conducive environment to enhance predictability for investors to facilitate the investments needed. In this regard, a delegation stressed the importance of stable energy planning which concretely considers national energy resource availability, energy market structure, and

energy infrastructure development, as well as aligning energy policy with financial policy through the cooperation between energy and financial authorities.

149. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) were highlighted by the delegations of Spain (written statement available [here](#)) and Uganda as effective mechanisms to leverage public funds and mitigate risks, thereby increasing private sector participation in renewable energy. Other actions Members are undertaking to de-risk renewable energy investments locally include innovative mechanisms such as the Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund in Antigua and Barbuda and government interventions in countries including Burkina Faso, Tonga and Zimbabwe (written statement available [here](#)) to streamline procedures, improve utility creditworthiness, diversify off-takers, and provide guarantees to private investors, among others.

150. At the international level, relevant partnerships were mentioned such as the Africa GreenCo, the Investment Mobilization Collaboration Alliance launched by Denmark, Norway's Energy for Development knowledge sharing program, the Green Guarantee Group launched by Germany, and IRENA's Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa (APRA). Mechanisms to leverage resources to fund renewable energy investments internationally were also mentioned, such as the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) in the European Union, and development finance institutions (DFIs) reform to expand climate finance resources, as in the case of Denmark's Investment Fund for Developing Countries (IFU).

151. Some delegations also highlighted their bilateral and regional efforts in facilitating access to finance and providing related technical assistance in developing countries. These include, for instance, Australia's and New Zealand's financial assistance for Pacific Island countries through official development assistance, risk guarantees, and equity investments; Italy's planned climate fund for countries in the Middle East and North Africa; and the European Union's Renewable Energy Support Program for Rural Regions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Delegations highlighted the role of multilateral development banks (MDBs) and donor countries in underwriting risks and providing concessional financing to attract private sector investments. Delegations also emphasised the need for stronger international cooperation, especially coordination between DFIs and MDBs in underwriting risks and providing concessional financing to create competitive capital markets conducive to renewable energy investments. One delegation called for MDBs to allow all stakeholders to access their risk data on defaults and recoveries, to inform renewable energy investments.

152. Delegations recognised IRENA's crucial role in capacity-building and knowledge dissemination to support Members in achieving SDG 7 and other climate goals. Several delegations acknowledged IRENA as a key knowledge partner, leveraging the Agency's research and analytical work to shape national policies. They called for IRENA to strengthen its support for Members lacking the capacity to establish energy markets and policies that attract private capital for renewables deployment. Some delegations specifically mentioned the need for IRENA to develop platforms for sharing best practices, providing technical assistance on project preparation, and enhancing local capacities.

153. Delegations lauded IRENA's existing support in the areas of technical assistance and matchmaking using platforms like the Climate Investment Platform and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform. They emphasised the importance of tailored guidance from IRENA to overcome financial barriers, design risk mitigation strategies, and promote scalable solutions that address the specific needs of diverse economies, focused on building sustainable local capabilities over time. Delegations called for IRENA to continue supporting Members in developing regulatory frameworks, feasibility studies, enabling environments, and innovative

financing mechanisms like green bonds and blended finance models to attract private investments in renewable energy.

154. Several delegations highlighted the importance of IRENA's Global Atlas project in providing essential data for renewable energy projects. In this regard, a delegation suggested that IRENA could further enhance these efforts by converting indicative resource data into bankable data. Two delegations suggested that IRENA leverage its convening power to bring together stakeholders with similar challenges and interests, thereby enhancing project scalability and collaboration. Delegations called for enhanced visibility of IRENA's efforts to mobilise financial resources and facilitate technology transfer for a global energy transition aligned with climate goals.

155. The Director-General expressed gratitude to Members for their appreciation of IRENA's work and assured that all interventions would be considered by the Secretariat. He also encouraged sideline meetings between delegations and IRENA Directors to translate commitments into action based on the ideas discussed during the programmatic discussion, especially with Members that are keen to collaborate further with IRENA.

**156. The Council considered and took note of the presentation and interventions made.**

### **Agenda Item 7: Programmatic discussion on Industry Driven Partnerships for Accelerated Energy Transition: AFID and UNEZA (C/27/BN/3)**

157. The Director-General introduced the topic, underlining that according to IRENA 1.5°C pathway, electricity consumption in end use sectors will triple by 2050 to over 87,000 TWh, compared with 2020. He stressed that to meet the rising demand, the power sector will undergo a significant decarbonisation, which would involve an increase in renewable energy share to 91% by 2050. The Director-General pointed out the industry sector as a major energy consumer and a substantial emitter, underscoring the global challenge of transforming and decarbonising power and industrial sectors. He stressed the necessity of engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders beyond governments, including the industrial and power sectors, to drive this transformation. The Director-General advocated for rapid, fundamental changes in markets and businesses, supported by proactive regulations, innovative technology, and collaboration among new and established players in the energy market to achieve these ambitious goals, and highlighted the importance of collective efforts and strong collaboration to realize a net-zero future.

158. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director, Country Engagement and Partnerships (CEP), highlighted the importance of international cooperation as central to IRENA's Medium-term Strategy and the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships and inclusive platforms for targeted actions and knowledge sharing. Mr Gonul [presented](#) the Alliance for Industry Decarbonization (AFID) and Utilities for Net Zero Alliance (UNEZA), noting that 70% of industrial energy consumption currently relies on fossil fuels, and outlined IRENA's 1.5-degree scenario, which advocates for a comprehensive decarbonisation strategy encompassing demand reduction, efficiency improvements, and direct and indirect use of clean electricity and direct use of renewable heat and biomass. Mr Gonul detailed how AFID was initiated to foster decarbonisation across industrial value chains and promote the understanding and adoption of renewable-based solutions to achieve country-specific net-zero goals. He informed about the AFID Decarbonization Commitment and its targets to 2030. Mr Gonul updated on progress by UNEZA as an international platform for cooperation among entities within the power utilities ecosystem to address and overcome common barriers to realising net-zero ambitions and emissions reduction targets in the near term. Mr Gonul outlined UNEZA's roadmap, aiming to triple renewable power, double energy efficiency by 2030, and reach

net-zero emissions by 2050. He invited Members to facilitate more industrial companies and utilities joining the alliances and benefitting from their work, emphasising the industry-driven nature of these initiatives facilitated by IRENA.

159. The Co-Chair of AFID, Siemens Energy, represented by Mr Khalid Bin Hadi, Managing Director, emphasised the significant progress and unity within the Alliance. Since its inception, over 70 key players have joined the Alliance to tackle industrial emissions, which represent a substantial portion of global greenhouse gas outputs. He highlighted the crucial role of emerging technologies, which are expected to contribute around 45% of emission reductions, in achieving ambitious decarbonisation goals. Mr Bin Hadi shared that governments are crucial in fostering a supportive environment for decarbonisation, which includes implementing clear regulations, streamlining permits, and providing financial support. Mr Bin Hadi urged private sector leaders and government decision-makers to actively support the industrial sector's decarbonisation initiatives.

160. The Co-Chair of UNEZA, The Abu Dhabi National Energy Company, PJSC (TAQA), represented by Mr Noel Aoun, Chief Strategy Officer, highlighted UNEZA's impressive growth up to 34 members and partners since its launch at COP28, underlining its significance as a valuable utilities initiative. Mr Aoun detailed UNEZA's strong commitment to tripling renewable energy capacity by 2030 and enhancing power sector infrastructure. He Aoun emphasised the complexity of the energy transition, pointing out the need for a coordinated approach among utilities, regulators and policymakers, and highlighted UNEZA's primary goal to broaden the knowledge base around current sector-specific barriers to the transition. Under one of the UNEZA workstreams, Mr Aoun mentioned the ongoing development of an aggregated 'demand signal' through a joint statement of the industry on supply chain. By offering visibility on the potential scale of demand over the next decade, UNEZA members aim to encourage suppliers to expand capacity and meet this growing demand. This 'signal' along with a series of high-level recommendations to further ease supply constraints will be published later this year. Mr Aoun pointed out the urgent need to rebuild the global power system and urged more utilities to join UNEZA in its mission to drive a net-zero future.

161. A delegation welcomed the involvement of their private sector in these multi-stakeholder initiatives, highlighting its crucial role in achieving net-zero and clean energy goals. It emphasised the need for clear processes and highlighted that partnerships are essential to learn from each other, facilitating an open exchange on the challenges each sector faces.

162. A delegation shared its national strategy focusing on ambitious renewable energy goals and the development of electrolyzers to support industrial decarbonisation by 2030. It highlighted the alignment with European directives and significant financial incentives to foster renewable hydrogen production. The delegation shared their approach to industrial decarbonisation, focusing on energy efficiency, electrifying demand when possible, and sustainable use of biomass and renewable gases, especially hydrogen. The country has allocated significant financial support, including EUR 600 million for 700 megawatts of renewable hydrogen, with an additional EUR 2.4 billion in the pipeline. Moreover, the country promotes a circular economy, supporting recycling plants for windmills and PV plants and batteries. The delegation shared their views regarding electrification and highlighted the critical aspect to reinforce transportation and distribution networks and how the country is updating their development plan for electricity through 2024.

163. A delegation highlighted the need of accelerating the deployment of clean electricity infrastructure to facilitate the nation's transition to net-zero emissions. It highlighted recommendations from its Clean Electricity Advisory Council, which advocates for a risk-based approach to project reviews and permitting to streamline processes and reduce delays. This

approach aims to foster faster, more inclusive project implementation while ensuring environmental protection.

164. A delegation shared that its country is firmly committed to the energy transition agenda, which prioritises energy affordability, accessibility, and security within its development plan. The country employs an inclusive approach involving civil society, industry, and governments at local, state, and federal levels in its energy transition. The delegation informed that its industry is actively involved in global energy transition initiatives including AFID, and the country is also exploring innovative solutions for energy storage, transport, and making global renewable energy supply chains competitive. The private sector is capitalising on government-provided policy incentives to accelerate the energy transition at the ground level, enhancing decentralised renewable energy solutions.

165. A delegation expressed support for UNEZA and its model of incorporating the private sector into discussions to complement other global clean energy initiatives. The delegation highlighted the Clean Energy Demand Initiative (CEDI), which collaborates with countries and corporations across various sectors to deploy clean energy and stimulate broader economic growth. The CEDI initiative aims to build a stable platform for companies committed to using 100% renewable energy by 2050 or earlier, which presents challenges in power systems historically designed for fossil fuels. Additionally, the delegation discussed the significant energy demands anticipated from data centres due to the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

166. A delegation expressed appreciation for IRENA's efforts to prioritise industry-driven decarbonisation globally, particularly AFID. The delegation highlighted its significant commitment to supporting the industry's transition to low-carbon operations with a comprehensive investment plan. This plan includes about USD 300 billion in public financing by 2030, the establishment of a Future Energy Fund to expand clean power, and a Climate Technology Fund to advance climate technologies. The delegation emphasised that these initiatives are designed to catalyse investment and mitigate risks in expanding renewable energy infrastructure, also supporting SMEs in carbon-intensive sectors through its Neutral Leadership Plan project.

167. A delegation emphasised the critical role of technology innovation in the industry sector to promote clean energy investment and facilitate emerging clean energy technologies. To support private sector activities, the delegation highlighted their domestic approach, which involves a synergy of publishing upcoming regulations and providing financial support to the private sector before these regulations take effect. The delegation detailed its experience with issuing climate transition bonds and implementing financial support for R&D in innovative technologies, planning to launch an emission trading system by 2026 and a green transformation surcharging scheme by 2028.

168. A delegation highlighted the significance of public-private cooperation in the energy sector, emphasising its role in providing long-term visibility necessary for spurring investments in grids and renewable energy generation. The delegation stressed the importance of international cooperation and multi-stakeholder platforms to facilitate the decarbonisation of electricity production and the build-out of energy infrastructure. The delegation expressed that it is committed to enhancing dialogue with stakeholders through initiatives like the Grid Action Plan, addressing regulatory barriers through the Net Zero Industry Act, and implementing strategies to increase renewable energy deployment and grid development. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to secure investment and streamline processes to support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

169. A delegation emphasised the crucial role of industry partnerships in global efforts to decarbonise energy systems, highlighting the significant investments required for modernising power grids and deploying submarine cables in Southeast Asia. These efforts are essential for enhancing the region's renewable energy uptake by the end of this decade. The delegation has introduced the Financing Asia's Transition Partnership (FAST-P), collaborating with multilateral development banks and philanthropic organisations to mobilise capital for bankable projects in the region. The delegation expressed appreciation for IRENA's efforts to catalyse public-private partnerships and projects on clean energy investments and green transition projects for Southeast Asia, and stated that it looks forward to strengthening these partnerships to triple the region's renewable energy capacity by 2030.

170. A delegation congratulated IRENA and its partners for launching vital international cooperation platforms essential for accelerating the global clean energy transition. The delegation highlighted the significance of collaborating with power utilities and the private sector to deploy renewable energy technologies and networks rapidly to meet the global goal of tripling renewable energy capacity. The delegation emphasised the role of UNEZA in bringing together global utilities and power companies to address common challenges and assist countries seeking support. The delegation also pointed out the collaboration between the Green Grids Initiative (GGI) and UNEZA to share expertise, engage with development banks and financial institutions to de-risk grid projects, and attract necessary private investments. It was shared that a joint supply chains working group has also been established under UNEZA to tackle global challenges related to capacity building and infrastructure development needed for the energy transition.

171. Mr Gonul thanked delegations for the support expressed towards the two industry-led initiatives supported and coordinated by IRENA. He expressed appreciation for the insights provided on the diverse experiences in decarbonisation and grid infrastructure development from various delegations, emphasising the importance of integrating these experiences and stakeholders into these initiatives. Mr Gonul noted that collaboration with the Clean Energy Demand Initiative (CEDI) will be explored and cooperation with the Green Grid Initiative (GGI) will be continued, particularly on the supply chain and access to climate finance.

**172. The Council considered and took note of the presentation and interventions made.**

## **Agenda Item 8: Administrative and Institutional matters**

### **a. Human Resources Management**

173. The Chair of the Council recalled that the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) met on 12 June 2024 and reviewed finance and institutional matters relating to the current Work Programme and Budget 2024-2025, as well as other administrative matters. She referred the Council to the Report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, contained in C/27/CRP/2.

**174. The Council took note of the Report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, contained in document C/27/CRP/2.**

- i. Report of the Director-General on Human Resources Management and Trends (including policies relating to the recruitment of General Service staff, as well as the requirements for movement from General Service to Professional levels) (C/27/3)**

175. The Director-General presented the Report on Human Resources Management and Trends (C/27/3) and highlighted the strategic importance of discussions on the matter in ensuring successful and effective fulfilment of IRENA's mandate. He reflected that the growth of the Agency, currently consisting of 169 Members and 15 States in Accession, underscores the collective commitment to advancing the global energy transition, and acknowledged that the Agency's Human Resources (HR) strategies must evolve to support this growth and meet emerging challenges and opportunities. Noting that the Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2027 highlights IRENA's commitment to fostering an inclusive, effective and dynamic workforce, the Director-General informed that the Agency's HR initiatives are designed to attract and retain top talent, enhance diversity, ensure gender balance, and reflect the global nature of the Membership.

176. Ms Jelena Barnes, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS), presented an overview of ongoing HR activities and data trends, as detailed in the abovementioned Report. Outlining the current human resources initiatives underway, Ms Barnes informed that a policy on consultants has been developed, providing the definition, purpose and role of individual consultants in line with IRENA's operational requirements and mandate, and that this policy will be finalised taking into account discussions on break in service.

177. Ms Barnes reported that the Agency has also reviewed cost-effective options for delivering performance management training to managers and staff, with the chosen model, to be rolled out in 2024, emphasising online delivery, strategic alignment and performance dialogue, amongst others, through interactive sessions and peer coaching.

178. Ms Barnes highlighted that the revised salary scale for General Service staff was implemented in February 2024, in line with the results of the comprehensive salary survey conducted by the United Nations, with a 13.5% increase in net salaries retroactive to April 2023. She added that a further increase of 6.7% was recently approved, effective from April 2024. She further reported that in the coming weeks, the Agency will conduct a competitive procurement process for medical insurance and service-attributed death and disability insurance, with the aim to enhance employee value proposition and offer first-class social security programmes.

179. Noting the successful completion of recruitment for Director-level positions at the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC), Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre (KPFC), and Administration and Management Services (AMS), Ms Barnes reported that the position of Director, Planning and Programme Support (PPS) is in the final stages of recruitment, with support from an executive search firm. She added that the Agency's succession plan includes advertising key positions nine to twelve months before an incumbent's departure, to ensure appropriate transitions. Ms Barnes further informed that the Agency is developing an employee induction kit, to improve onboarding and integration of new employees.

180. With regard to HR trends, Ms Barnes highlighted that staff exit surveys continue to be monitored, with the main reasons for separation including family reasons, alternative job opportunities, and lack of career opportunities. She reported that as of 30 April 2024, 203 out of 214 core and project staff positions are filled or under recruitment, with average staff turnover rates dropping to 7% as of the same date, and vacancy rates declining to 14% in the first quarter of 2024. She informed that the average length of service of existing staff is 4.8 years (4.3 years for Professional staff and 6.7 years for General Services staff), while separated staff have had an average length of service of 2.8 years.

181. The Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC), Tonga, represented by H.E. Mr 'Akau'ola, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador to the UAE, presented

the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 12 June 2024 as contained in document C/27/CRP/2.

182. Highlighting a few salient points from the AFC meeting, the AFC Chair informed that Members, in their interventions, underscored the need for committed staff who can adapt to the changing renewable energy landscape, noting that IRENA offers competitive compensation and benefits, with additional perks, such as housing allowances, provided by the UAE. He added that in this regard, the need to refine operations and policies to uphold high standards of efficiency and integrity was emphasised.

183. The AFC Chair reported that there was a call for a standardised approach to HR policies and staff promotions, noting inconsistencies in job classifications and promotions, as well as a call for an analysis of the workforce structure to ensure effective mandate delivery, with a delegation suggesting restructuring for greater efficiency. He informed that a question was raised on the rationale behind certain appointments as well as the organisational structure, particularly with respect to the large number of staff in the Director-General's office, as well as the placement of the Events Unit. The AFC Chair further reported that the Secretariat was requested to provide, for the next Council meeting, a detailed report on functions and division allocations, including consultants, to improve financial efficiency.

184. The AFC Chair informed that concerns were raised about travel budget transparency and the growing number of high-level positions, questioning the sustainability of a top-heavy structure. He stated that the Secretariat was urged towards standardised application of UN-aligned regulations and fair recruitment practices.

185. The AFC Chair informed that, in light of dynamic recruitment in the rapidly evolving renewable energy sector, nurturing talent through international cooperation was emphasised as key to enhancing IRENA's workforce quality. He further informed that the Agency's growth and the need for long-term manpower planning was highlighted, with a suggestion for IRENA to explore diverse funding sources beyond Member contributions, including private-public partnerships and philanthropic donations, to support future readiness and address current challenges.

186. The AFC Chair reported that the Director-General acknowledged the interventions made and informed of efforts to establish a multi-donor fund, which will soon be operational and may accept private contributions, while emphasising the importance of maintaining the Agency's neutrality.

187. Delegations thanked the Secretariat and the AFC Chair for their reports. A delegation welcomed the development of the policy on consultants, and stated that it would welcome the opportunity to review the draft policy. The delegation expressed that it was pleased to see a focus on improving IRENA's performance management system, noting that some dissatisfaction with training and development opportunities was reported in staff exit surveys. Commending IRENA's efforts to ensure continuity of operations, especially in light of staff shortages in the Human Resources office, the delegation encouraged IRENA to address retention issues at all levels of staff, beyond key leadership positions. The delegation further welcomed additional information on plans to address retention and staff turnover issues, especially given the results from staff exit surveys as noted on page two of document C/27/3, and requested clarification on the specific elements of the reorganisation of the Human Resources team.

188. A delegation expressed that it is pleased to see that IRENA's turnover rate has improved and is now below 10%, noting that, while this is a preliminary figure up to 30 April 2024, it represents a drastic improvement compared to the year prior. The delegation underscored the importance of

IRENA's efforts to foster a positive culture and an open forum where all staff have a voice, and noted several critical areas for consideration, of particular importance for an international organisation which frequently works and travels across many time zones and cultures, as highlighted in the KPMG Report. In this regard, the delegation stated that while views may vary on the ranking of how important or easy each initiative is to implement, overall, these initiatives will benefit IRENA and its staff. For this reason, the delegation welcomed a more detailed plan and regular updates on the implementation of initiatives.

189. This delegation raised one more topic for action, as mentioned in the AFC meeting as well as at the Assembly, on the requirements for movement of General Service staff to Professional levels, and strongly recommended that the Secretariat normalise the requirement of all General Service staff to undertake a similar type of competency exam, as per United Nations (UN) best practice. The delegation stated that, if such competency exam has not yet been introduced, the Secretariat should conduct outreach to the UN to understand how such a measure could be efficiently implemented at IRENA. The delegation emphasised that formalising such rules and regulations will benefit all General Service staff and give them an equal opportunity to aspire to Professional posts at IRENA as well as other international organisations, and further recommended that the Secretariat proactively share with the Membership the timeline of how they intend to implement this initiative.

190. Another delegation welcomed the improved data on staff turnover and decreased vacancies. This delegation requested the Secretariat to provide an updated organisational chart at the earliest convenience, as well as contact information of staff below the managerial level, stating that this would boost horizontal communication and would be particularly helpful for national experts to maintain direct contact with IRENA staff on issues of substance, thereby enhancing the visibility of staff at the Agency with national administrations.

191. Reflecting on the interventions made, the Director-General acknowledged the issues raised and affirmed that the Secretariat will follow up with the guidance provided by the AFC and the Council, including on the timeline and cost estimate for the implementation of HR initiatives. He informed that the Secretariat is making arrangements to post the organisational chart on the IRENA website, and further thought will be put into finding the best approach for direct contact with staff, noting the need to ensure care in this regard.

192. Concerning the promoting of General Service staff, the Director-General clarified that no such promotions have taken place under his leadership, and that a set of criteria has been established for General Service staff having a professional quality to apply for key positions. He reiterated that a system of automatic promotions does not exist, and stated that any individual wishing access to a position has to go through the recruitment process. Acknowledging the absence of a clear rule on this matter, the Director-General informed that the Secretariat has been working on this to be submitted to the attention of Members. The Director-General requested the AMS Director, Ms Barnes, to provide additional information on this issue, as well as with regard to the restructuring of the office, including the number of people working in different capacities at present.

193. With regard to the ongoing efforts to re-organise the Human Resources office, Ms Barnes informed that the number of staff in the HR office has reduced in recent years, with the HR team currently consisting of two Professional level staff and four assistant level staff, of which two are at the General Service level, and two are Service Contract holders. Ms Barnes acknowledged that, while the Agency has been tasked with a number of requests and requirements in terms of improvement, including establishing appropriate and fully developed succession plans as well as learning and development initiatives, the Secretariat is assessing how to implement these initiatives

with existing staff, as there are also ongoing transactional activities and other matters that have been prioritised.

194. On the requirements for the movement of General Service staff to Professional level positions, Ms Barnes clarified that the updated Recruitment and Selection Policy includes criteria that all applicants have to meet. She added that General Service staff may apply for posts up to a P2 level; have to go through competitive recruitment and selection processes; have to meet all the requirements in the vacancy announcement in terms of education and work experience; and must have a minimum of five years of continuous service with the Agency. She further outlined that they must also have a contract valid for a minimum of another six months, or a legitimate expectation that their contract is going to be extended, and that internal applicants at the General Service level must have a minimum rating of “fully meets expectations” in their performance evaluation reports.

195. A delegation welcomed the Report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, and in its capacity as a member of the AFC, raised the concern indicated by the Director-General during the AFC meeting on the impending departure of a number of high-level staff members for various reasons. Noting that this would create a major gap in qualified and trained staff at IRENA, the delegation requested the Secretariat to propose an action plan to safeguard and avoid such a gap, for consideration by the AFC.

196. A delegation raised a point of clarification on the response provided by Ms Barnes with respect to the requirements for the movement of General Service staff to Professional level positions. The delegation requested further understanding on whether IRENA intends to maintain the current requirements and criteria, or whether the Agency will look into current requirements in light of the suggestions made by the delegation for the second time since the fourteenth session of the Assembly, on the issue of the requirement of all General Service staff to undertake a similar type of competency exam, as per UN best practice

197. Ms Barnes clarified that the Secretariat welcomes the initiatives and will conduct outreach to the UN on best practices, with a view to assessing how these can be incorporated into IRENA’s practices, to the extent that they may apply.

198. The Director-General welcomed the point raised on the action plan in light of impending staff departures, and stated that the Secretariat will present this, in writing, to the AFC. Highlighting the impending departures of twenty-four high-level staff members and the presence of three new Directors at the Council meeting, the Director-General expressed that the ability to estimate the type and scale of issues has enabled continuity of work. He added, however, that the Agency is losing capacity in some of the main offices, including those involved in the World Energy Transitions Outlook, as well as the office that provides support on many important topics. For this reason, the Director-General affirmed that the Secretariat will present proposals on the matter, if the request made by the delegation is accepted by the Council.

199. A delegation requested clarification on the suggestion raised regarding the action plan as well as the response provided by the Director-General, noting that the next steps following the AFC meeting have clearly been defined, and requested clear understanding of the proposal put forth for consideration by the Council.

200. The Director-General clarified his understanding that if no objections are raised against the request for the Secretariat to prepare an action plan, the Chair of the Council could reflect this request in the summary report of the Council meeting. He added that the Secretariat stands ready

to present, in the near future, a proposal to avoid gaps posed by impending staff departures, unless otherwise decided by the Council.

201. In response to the clarification provided by the Director-General, the delegation welcomed the suggestion, noting that they have been requesting, since 2018, to have a succession plan in place for impending staff departures in light of reaching tenure limits. In line with this request, the delegation stated their position that the Secretariat is to provide clear succession planning as well as a retention plan to avoid staff leaving after 2.8 years of service, and expressed their understanding that the request made on the action plan is in line with this position.

202. The delegation referred to in paragraph 195 requesting the action plan confirmed that, in view of the large number of staff leaving as well as the Director-General's remarks on the matter, they would like to see an action plan to avoid gaps in high-level positions.

203. The Chair of the Council, in summarising the interventions made, highlighted that a concern was raised at the AFC meeting specifically relating to almost 24 staff members, including senior staff members, leaving at almost the same time upon reaching maximum tenure. The Chair reiterated the question posed on how this will be handled, and whether there is a special plan in place to manage this. In this regard, the Chair stated the clear understanding that this issue should have been managed through succession planning, as reported by the AFC Chair, and expressed the understanding that the Director-General has noted those issues which have come from the Council.

**204. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on Human Resources Management and Trends, including policies relating to the recruitment of General Service staff, as well as the requirements for movement from General Service to Professional levels, contained in document C/27/3, and the interventions made by Members and the recommendations thereof on the various matters which were under discussion. The Council also took note of the issues raised by Members on the matter in the Report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee.**

**205. The Council took note of all issues raised and agreed that the Secretariat will implement the proposals and provide responses to the issues, in particular additional information which has been requested.**

**ii. Report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) on the Status of the consultations on the Break-in-Service (C/27/4, C/27/CRP/2/Add.1)**

206. The Chair of the Council introduced the item and informed that the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, Tonga, represented by H.E. Mr 'Akau'ola, convened the Open-Ended Group on the Break in Service on 6 June 2024. The Chair of the Council invited the AFC Chair to introduce the matter and report on the outcome of the discussions of the Open-Ended Group on the Break in Service.

207. The AFC Chair informed that during the Open-Ended Group meeting, delegations took the opportunity to express views on several aspects of the break in service. He added that a comprehensive listing of the discussions and issues raised, as well as the information provided by the Secretariat, is contained in document C/27/4.

208. Highlighting a few points from the discussion, the AFC Chair reported that the issue of the length of engagement of consultants was raised, questioning their cost and effectiveness compared to regular staff. He noted that preference was expressed on engaging consultants for short-term projects with a clear end date or on a retainer basis, particularly in ensuring continuity of services during hiring breaks.

209. The AFC Chair reported that there was an enquiry on the Secretariat's adherence to Council decisions, particularly regarding the proposal for a four-year break in service, with a delegation emphasising that former staff should not be reengaged to perform the same functions they previously held. He further reported that clarification was sought on information provided on HR management data, specifically concerning staff turnover rates; the policy framework for direct appointments, especially concerning administrative roles; the implementation of job classification exercises and potential impact of budget constraints on HR capabilities; and overall organisational effectiveness.

210. The AFC Chair informed that during the Open-Ended Group meeting, it was also highlighted that the list of direct hires provided by the Secretariat seemed incomplete, and a request was made for a more comprehensive analysis. He reported that this was provided by the Secretariat and transmitted to the Membership.

211. The AFC Chair stated that the importance of a recruitment process balancing technical skills, expertise, experience, potential long-term commitment, and geographical diversity was emphasised, along with the need for a comprehensive HR strategy focusing on succession planning, knowledge management, and talent development.

212. The AFC Chair noted that he had also reported on these discussions at the meeting of the AFC on 12 June 2024, and informed that comprehensive details on the proceedings and deliberations of the AFC are presented in C/27/CRP/2. In this regard, the AFC Chair informed that during the AFC meeting, a number of views were expressed by delegations on the issue of the break in service, including the need for staff to acquire new skills and experience, the importance of ensuring fiscal responsibility and for IRENA to maintain a dynamic workforce in tune with the rapidly evolving renewable energy sector.

213. In view of this, and observing that Members were close to coming to a resolution, the AFC Chair reported that, in his capacity as Chair of the AFC, he called for a small working group comprised of interested Members, namely the United Arab Emirates as Vice-Chair of the AFC, Antigua and Barbuda, China, El Salvador, Germany, and the United States of America. He informed that the small working group held its discussions immediately after the AFC meeting, and agreed on a proposal to be presented to the Council. He invited the Council to refer to document C/27/CRP/2/Add.1, containing the proposal for consideration by the Council, and all of its observations and recommendations.

214. Highlighting a few salient aspects of the small working group discussions and the proposal itself, the AFC Chair stated that the small working group agreed to recommend a 30-month (i.e. two and a half years) break in service period before a staff member who has reached maximum period of service of seven years, or nine years in cases where a two-year extension has already been granted, can be rehired into a fixed term appointment. The small working group also agreed that any staff member with the exceptional 13-year tenure should not be eligible for rehire, even after a 30-month break in service has elapsed.

215. The AFC Chair stated that the small working group also agreed to recommend that the provisions on break in service include the following: a provision requiring the Secretariat to first

conduct a competitive hiring process which is open to external candidates before rehiring a former staff member into a vacant position, except in exceptional circumstances; a provision stipulating that after completing the mandatory break in service, a staff member not be rehired into the position previously held; no specification on the position level to which the break in service period applies, meaning that the break in service period applies to all staff on fixed term appointments subject to IRENA's tenure policy.

216. Noting the small working group's observation that it needed to understand the provisions in the draft policy on consultants before it could reach a decision on the break in service period for former staff to be rehired on temporary appointments or consultancies, the AFC Chair informed that the small working group requests the Secretariat present a draft of the policy on the use of the consultants to the Council at its twenty-eighth meeting, so that a decision on the break in service periods both for fixed term appointments and for consultancies can be considered for final approval at the fifteenth session of the Assembly.

217. The AFC Chair underlined the cruciality of ensuring comprehensive and internally consistent policies, and the need for consistency with existing rules, regulations, and HR policies and internal directives – noting that some of which may stay the same, but new ones will have to be formulated to reflect this proposal, if agreed by the Council and subsequently by the Assembly at its fifteenth session. He added that, as is expected, before this proposal goes to the fifteenth Assembly, it needs to be presented in the form of a draft decision, for consideration by the Council at its twenty-eighth meeting, for recommendation to the fifteenth Assembly.

218. Stressing that the complete proposal is contained in document C/27/CRP/2/Add.1 for consideration by the Council, the AFC Chair noted that the break in service has been a longstanding issue of the Council, and expressed his appreciation to the members of the AFC and other participants who have contributed to the work of the AFC, and to the small working group. Highlighting that this draft consideration for the Council was achieved in twenty minutes, the AFC Chair expressed that it may sometimes prove beneficial to move to small working groups when considering complex issues.

219. A delegation thanked the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee for the report, and for facilitating and consultations and discussions that many Members had joined since the last Council meeting. Reflecting that these discussions were highly productive, this delegation expressed that it was pleased to see many longstanding issues appearing to have been resolved.

220. A delegation echoed the views expressed, and thanked the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee for his leadership and initiative to resolve this situation. The delegation also expressed gratitude to the informal working group for their expediency and proposal, which appears to address many of the concerns raised. This delegation further requested clarification on the process, and enquired whether the Council would be expected to consider this proposal at its current meeting, and recommend endorsement by the Assembly at its twenty-eighth meeting.

221. A delegation joined others in thanking the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee for his leadership, and extended special appreciation to the delegation of the United States of America for providing subject matter experts to delve into this topic.

222. A delegation echoed the sentiments expressed on the leadership of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee for spearheading discussions of the Open-Ended Group on the Break in Service, and for coordinating the subsequent consultations on the topic. The delegation expressed the view that these consultations are extremely relevant to achieve consensus on this important matter, which will impact the work carried out by IRENA.

223. On the matter of rehiring of staff of the IRENA Secretariat, this delegation expressed their concern that this appears to be re-opening the matter of extension of service for the staff of IRENA, in a different form. The delegation further expressed the concern that in effect, the same issue is being discussed, albeit with an added complexity of a break in service for staff completing their tenure. For this reason, the delegation reiterated their principal position that the tenure of IRENA staff cannot go beyond the 13 years, under any circumstances.

224. Having reviewed documents C/27/4 as well as C/27/CRP/2/Add.1, the delegation offered their preliminary thoughts on the matter of rehiring of staff for a fixed term contract, noting that the proposal is still under consideration at Capital in the meantime.

225. The delegation welcomed the proposal that any staff member who has completed the exceptional tenure of 13 years should not be eligible for re-hiring, and recommended that the same disqualification could also be considered for staff who have completed nine or more years as well, as they have already been given an extension in recognition of their experience and expertise.

226. On the position for which staff can be rehired, the delegation requested clarity on whether the staff can be re-hired for another position at the same level, or if such re-hiring would only be possible for a higher level. In this regard, the delegation expressed the view that, if staff is re-hired at the same level but in a different position, then the argument that IRENA will benefit from the additional knowledge and experience gained by that staff member during the break in service period will not hold good.

227. The delegation further requested clarity on whether there is any maximum limit on the duration of the fixed term contract for re-hiring, stating that it is also not clear if there will be any limit on the number of times a particular staff member can be re-hired. In this regard, the delegation expressed the view that ideally, the total duration of IRENA staff should not exceed 13 years, including the period of re-hiring – otherwise, the fixed tenure policy of IRENA will have no meaning.

228. Noting that the Secretariat is also updating its policy on the engagement of consultants, the delegation expressed their willingness to provide their observations on the re-hiring of staff as consultants, once this policy is made available. Stressing that the budgetary implications of such a proposal are paramount, this delegation requested the Secretariat to present data on the matter.

229. The delegation highlighted that the strength of IRENA stems from its agility to keep with the changing pace of technology as well as the challenges in the field of renewable energy and the energy transition. The delegation expressed the view that despite the experience, re-hiring the same people may inhibit this agility by perpetuating the existing vision and point of view. Noting that new talent and perspective will always breathe fresh life into any organisation, the delegation stated that they believe IRENA should retain its agility and nimbleness.

230. In highlighting an administrative matter, the delegation expressed understanding for the difficulties in aligning the schedules of multiple stakeholders and holding discussions on these important topics, and requested that such meetings are scheduled in a manner that allows Members enough time to assimilate the reports as well as the understandings from the Open-Ended Group meetings, for effective discussion during the Council meeting.

231. The Chair of the Council provided the Chair of the AFC the opportunity to respond to some of the issues raised. On the re-hiring of staff members with the exceptional 13-year tenure, the AFC Chair referred to paragraph 2 of C/27/CRP/2/Add.1, which states that “any staff members

with exceptional 13-year tenures should not be eligible for rehire”, and confirmed that there will be no consideration of re-hiring for these staff members. With respect to the other issues raised, the AFC Chair expressed the view that it would be unfair for these to be addressed by the Chair, and stated that it is for the AFC to consider if this proposal is to be furthered after the Council.

232. A delegation requested clarification on how the Council will proceed on the issue, noting that while some Members had agreed to the proposal as presented by the Chair of the AFC, a number of questions have now been raised by a delegation, which have to be looked into or integrated into this proposal.

233. The Chair of the AFC expressed the understanding that the only salient point raised by the delegation was on the re-hiring of staff members post thirteen years, and noted that this issue has been accounted for in the proposal, with the clear stipulation that such re-hiring cannot happen. The AFC Chair further expressed the understanding that the delegation had presented additional considerations rather than a re-engagement of the draft proposal, and acknowledged that a number of steps remain in moving forward on this issue, as mentioned in the document. In this regard, the AFC Chair suggested direct engagement with the concerned delegation, ensuring adequate time to produce reports and convene meetings that they can attend, to further consider these issues rather than having to change the present proposal, stressing that this suggestion on the way forward is an offer of assistance, and contingent on the agreement of the concerned delegation.

234. The delegation referred to in paragraphs 222 to 230 reiterated that, as mentioned in their previous intervention, they welcome the idea that a person who has completed the exceptional tenure of thirteen years cannot be re-hired. The delegation thanked the members of the small working group for bringing this idea clearly, stressing that this is an extremely important and a positive development that has been achieved, in line with their consistent policy.

235. In highlighting an aspect that they hold important, the delegation stated that the fixed tenure policy at IRENA is very different from various other organisations which do not have such provisions. For this reason, the delegation emphasised that when looking at the idea of a break in service, the proposal must also take into account that the break in service should not end up enabling the perpetual tenure of IRENA staff.

236. The delegation provided an example in relation to their first question, and explained that, based on the current proposal, if a particular staff member retires after completion of ten years of service at IRENA, this staff member can be re-hired after a break in service of 2.5 years. The delegation highlighted that there is no clarity on the maximum period for such re-hiring – including whether an additional tenure of seven years, or subsequent actions of two years and four years, which is normally permissible for any staff who is hired, would also be applicable to this particular staff member who is being re-hired. In this regard, the delegation explained the need to set a duration for such re-hiring, such as 3 years, for example.

237. The delegation outlined their second question on the number of times such re-hiring can happen, and further explained that in framing the policy of re-hiring with a break in service, an added limit on the number of times such re-hiring can happen would clearly underline that a particular staff member can only be re-hired for a specified duration. Stressing that they would like to see this level of clarity and information presented, the delegation stated that the working proposal, if elaborated further, can address some of these matters, and expressed that they would welcome consideration of this elaborated proposal at the next Council meeting.

238. The Chair of the Council expressed appreciation to the delegation for its proposal in terms of additional information and further clarity on some of the issues, especially on the re-hiring in

terms of the second tenure, acknowledging the need to consider whether a different tenure would be set out for staff members who are re-hired, and highlighting the agreement among delegations on the maximum tenure.

239. The Chair of the Council expressed the view that the submission proposed by the Chair of the AFC can be improved to ensure that some of the issues raised are included, highlighting that this proposal is a preliminary report and recommendation from the AFC, which then can be further elaborated at the next Council meeting and then recommended to the fifteenth session of the Assembly.

240. Noting the tremendous progress in terms of getting to a document which can now be finalised, the Chair of the Council expressed the aim to avoid continuously reviewing documents without any final decision on them, and going into analysis paralysis. Expressing that this policy document can be a live document which can be improved on as the discussion moves forward, the Chair of the Council confirmed that there was consensus by the Council for the proposal of the Chair of the AFC to serve as an initial proposal at this meeting, which can be subjected to polishing up on one or two issues, so that a document is ready for consideration by the Assembly.

**241. The Council took note of the Proposal by the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee on the Break in Service, contained in document C/27/CRP/2/Add.1, and agreed to the following recommendations as contained in the proposal:**

- I. A thirty-month, that is two and a half years, break-in-service period before a staff member, who has reached a maximum period of service of seven years (or nine years, in cases where a two-year extension had already been granted), can be re-hired into a fixed term appointment.**
- II. Any staff members with exceptional thirteen-year tenures should not be eligible for rehire, even after a thirty-month break-in-service has elapsed.**
- III. The provisions on the break-in-service will include the following:**
  - i. A provision requiring the Secretariat to first conduct a competitive hiring process which is open to external candidates, before re-hiring a former staff member into a vacant position, except in exceptional circumstances.**
  - ii. A provision stipulating that after completing the mandatory break-in-service, a staff member not be re-hired into the position previously held.**
  - iii. No specification on the position level to which the break-in-service period applies. In other words, the break-in-service period applies to all staff in fixed-term appointments subject to IRENA's tenure policy.**

242. **On the use of consultants, the Council agreed that the provisions in the Draft Policy on Consultants need to be fully understood before it can reach a decision on the break-in-service period for former staff to be re-hired on a temporary appointment/consultancy.**

243. **The Council requested that the Secretariat present a draft of the Policy on the use of Consultants to the twenty-eighth Council, so that a decision on the break-in-service periods both for fixed-term appointments and for consultancies can be considered for final approval at the fifteenth session of the Assembly.**

244. The Council agreed to take into account policies at other tenured international organisations and the recommendations in the UN Joint Inspection Unit Report, JIU/REP/2023/8 - Review of the Use of Non-Staff Personnel and Related Contractual Modalities in the United Nations System Organization, when developing the policy on consultants in line with such international best practices.

245. The Council agreed to request the Secretariat to provide and present a Draft Policy on the use of Consultants to the Council at its twenty-eighth meeting for its consideration, taking into account the interventions made on this matter, with a number of issues and additional information which is required before this issue can be finalised for recommendation to the Assembly.

246. The Council agreed to this issue, including the request to provide the present Draft Policy on the use of Consultants, taking into account the interventions which have been made on this matter.

247. The Council agreed to consider the Draft Decision on the Break in Service at its twenty-eighth meeting, based on the recommendations in document C/27/CRP/2/Add.1, and including the additional inputs from Members on the proposal therein. The Council took note of all the interventions made.

**b. Report of the Director-General - Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken (C/27/5)**

248. The Director-General presented the Report on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken (C/27/5) and informed that during the period 19 September 2023 to 10 May 2024, the Internal Audit Office (IAO) implemented the following activities:

- Submitted a Comprehensive Audit Report to the External Auditor on recommendations and management actions on audit activities for the year 2023, pursuant to Financial Regulation 11.4 (c).
- Prepared a Risk-based Internal Audit Plan for the Work Programme and Budget 2024-2025, pursuant to Section VI (b) of the Internal Audit Charter.
- Conducted a Self-Assessment with Independent External Validation on the quality assessment of the internal audit activity, as required by the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.
- Followed up on the status of implementation of internal audit recommendations related to the previous audits of the Human Resources policy manual, Consultancy Services, and the Administration of Justice. In this regard, the Human Resources Office has released a directive on the Performance Management and Appraisal System and a directive on Recruitment and Selection in the year 2023. However, it has been noted that the final directive on Consultancy services has not been promulgated as discussions are ongoing.
- Submitted, to the Director-General, the Annual Audit Report relevant to the audit activities performed in the year 2023, pursuant to Section VIII of the Internal Audit Charter.

249. In reference to the audit on the Administration of Justice, the Director-General reported that the IAO noted that an independent consultant has been engaged to review IRENA's Code of

Conduct, in order to serve as a roadmap which would eventually assist management in drafting and promulgating the needed policies and directives, as appropriate.

250. The Director-General informed that a directive on the Disciplinary Process and a directive on establishment of the IRENA Disciplinary Board have recently been promulgated, to set forth the detailed procedures for the implementation of the disciplinary process, pursuant to Staff Regulations 11.1 and 11.2 and Chapter 11 of the Staff Rules.

251. A delegation extended gratitude to the IAO for their dedicated work over the years, and to the Director-General for the update on closing the identified gaps. The delegation highlighted that, as noted in the present report, the IAO recommended to review and update the administration of justice at IRENA in the report presented to the Council at its twenty-fifth meeting in May 2023. Noting that this work is ongoing and that a consultant has been engaged to provide guidance, the delegation requested to understand a timeline of this activity, given that the administration of justice is a crucial element of effective human resource management.

252. The delegation further highlighted that the present report indicates that the update of the Human Resources policy manual has been pending for some time, underlining that this issue was first mentioned in the audit report presented to the Council at its twenty-first meeting in May 2021. Noting that no progress has been reported on closing the gaps since then, the delegation firmly recommended providing the Membership with a clear gaps analysis of the policies that need updating, along with a timeline for those updates.

253. The delegation stated their understanding that any changes to the Staff Rules and Regulations require the consensus of the Membership, whereas directives to the overall Human Resources policy manual do not, and requested clarification from the Secretariat, with the inputs of the Legal Office, as to whether this understanding is correct.

254. Referring to the Administration of Justice and related directives, the delegation further recommended that the Secretariat shares those documents with the IRENA Membership, for its information and guidance.

255. The AMS Director, Ms Barnes, informed that considerable work has been done in updating the Human Resources policy manual, and that this policy manual will be finalised based on discussions on break in service, to cover all elements that pertain to potential re-hiring and consultancies.

256. On the work relating to the directive on the Administration of Justice, Ms Barnes stated that while significant work was put into updating the existing Code of Conduct, the Secretariat has been informed that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) is planning to release the updated Code of Conduct in early 2025. Ms Barnes stated that for this reason, the Secretariat has decided to put further updates to the Code of Conduct on hold until the launch by the ICSC. She further informed that in the meantime, the Secretariat has reverted to updating the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest, which, as rightly indicated by the delegation, is outdated and requires several elements that need to be addressed.

257. Noting that Members, in their previous interventions have requested IRENA to update its Whistleblower Protection policy, Ms Barnes informed that the Secretariat intends to finalise and submit this policy to the Membership in 2024, adding that the Secretariat also intends to work on defining 'misconduct' and issuing a policy accordingly.

258. The delegation expressed the hope that these issues could be closed by at least the upcoming twenty-eighth meeting of the Council.

**259. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General – Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken, contained in document C/27/5, as well as the interventions made on this matter.**

**c. Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2023 (C/27/6)**

260. The AMS Director, Ms Barnes, presented the Audited Financial Statements of IRENA covering the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, along with the report of the Agency's External Auditor. She informed that the External Auditor submitted an unqualified audit opinion, confirming that the financial statements represent fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency at the end of 2023, and that its financial performance and cash flows were in line with the applicable Financial Regulations and Procedures as well as in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards. She reported that the External Auditor raised one new audit recommendation related to assets, and also closed one previous recommendation from 2022.

261. Ms Barnes further reported that, as detailed in the financial statements, USD 64.6 million, or 99.7% of the biennium budget was utilised, and that Members paid 92.1% of their assessed contributions in 2023. She added that voluntary contributions to programmatic activities amounted to USD 25.7 million, which represented 45% of the total revenue received in 2023. She informed that the Agency had a financial statement loss of USD 5.7 million, as well as USD 1.8 million in core surpluses, as reflected in note 18 to the financial statements.

262. A delegation raised a few questions on the audited financial statements, noting that total non-current liabilities almost doubled, from USD 1.9 million in 2022 to around USD 4.1 million in 2023, and requested an explanation on what is driving that increase. The delegation further noted that there was a cash decrease of USD 8.8 million, and observed that, according to paragraph 2.7 of the financial statements, there was a reduce in liquidity. In this regard, the delegation requested an explanation on what is driving that decrease in cash, and whether it is due to increasing operations or if there should be any concern in this reduction in liquidity.

263. The delegation further observed that there was an increase in accruals due to what the Agency refers to as employees' vacation accrual, and requested an explanation on what policies are in place to reduce such growth in holiday or vacation accrual. The delegation further asked if there is any policy in place at the Agency in terms of vacation accrual, including whether there is a limit that can be carried over to the following year, or whether a staff member would lose any unused vacation days in a given year.

264. In response to these questions, Ms Barnes clarified that in terms of the non-current liabilities and the return, this is a reflection of the unspent contributions from previous years that were returned back to Members. On the loss that was recorded in the financial statements, Ms Barnes clarified that this noted deficit is more due to the timing difference in the recognition of revenue and expenses, which is a result of multi-year contributions. With regard to the increase in accruals and existing policies in place, Ms Barnes informed that IRENA has a policy in place that limits the number of accrued annual leave days to sixty days.

265. The delegation requested additional clarification on unspent contributions that were returned to the contributors, and asked for elaboration so that Members can have an understanding as to what is happening to their unspent contributions that was returned.

266. Ms Barnes clarified that the funding returned to Members is not only the unspent core contributions, but also includes any other revenues. She provided an example of how this was reflected in the last biennia, and outlined that the core surpluses at the end of biennium 2021, for example, was USD 2.63 million, and reminded that this biennium was heavily impacted by COVID-19. She added that this USD 2.6 million was the result of USD 1.8 million of underspending on the core budget contributions, in addition to USD 68,000 of income from new Members, and USD 741,000 of accrued interest on funds in the bank, highlighting this as one example of funding that was returned to Members and also reflected the non-current liabilities of the Agency.

267. A delegation congratulated IRENA for receiving an unqualified audit opinion, and expressed that they are pleased that IRENA effectively carried out its mandate, as outlined in the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, despite the challenges posed by the economic environment. In this regard, the delegation stated that it understands and appreciates the continued pressures placed on the budget, and is optimistic that IRENA, working with its Committees and the Open-Ended Group, can effectively address these issues for the next biennium.

268. A delegation, in underlining previous discussions on the consultants policy, observed that the expenses on consultants and contractual services increased a lot in 2023 compared to 2022, by nearly 50%, whereas regular staff costs decreased, now leaving a proportion of consultancy services surpassing staff costs by nearly a factor of two to one. The delegation expressed the view that this proportion is atypical and once again underlined the urgency for having clear rules on the use of consultants.

269. Ms Barnes clarified that the line in the financial statements which shows consultancies also includes all project and temporary staff, meaning that it is an accumulation of all non-core positions, project and temporary staff, associate professionals, and consultants, and is also significantly impacted by voluntary funding that the Agency uses, where additional positions are funded by such sources. She further clarified that a significantly larger proportion of the figure relates to the non-core positions, and only to a smaller extent to consultants.

270. Based on the clarification received, the delegation suggested that IRENA consider, in the future, to provide a breakdown in the notes so that Members understand which part of these expenses is driven by project costs and what are core, real consultancy services. The Chair of the Council agreed that it would be important to include a note breaking down these expenses in the Agency's final accounts.

**271. The Council took note of the Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2023, contained in C/27/6 as well as issues raised by Members on the matter in the Report of the Administration and Finance Committee, and agreed to transmit it to the Assembly at its fifteenth session.**

**d. 2023 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA (C/27/7)**

272. The Chair of the Provident Fund Management Board, Ms Arieta Rakai, presented the 2023 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA as well as the Financial Statements of the Provident Fund for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023, as contained in document C/27/7.

273. Ms Rakai reported that in 2023, the Staff Provident Fund Management Board (SPFMB) conducted formal quarterly reviews of the Fund's performance, in collaboration with Zurich LLC, the administrator of the Fund, and informed that over the course of the year, the total net assets of the Provident Fund were valued at USD 27,212,148. She further reported that a review of the Provident Fund investment approach was conducted by Mercer Financial Services Middle East in May 2022, and by Towers Watson Limited in November 2022, and that once concluded, these reviews and recommendations were presented to the participants of the Provident Fund at its Annual General Meeting in 2023.

274. Ms Rakai informed that, apart from the existing Fund option, the SPFMB decided to implement three additional Fund options that meet the plan's policy and objectives, and that Provident Fund participants are allowed to select the Fund option for their contributions. She reported that the 2023 financial statements of the Staff Provident Fund were audited by the External Auditor of the Agency, and informed that the External Auditor rendered an unqualified audit opinion, confirming that the financial statements represent fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Staff Provident Fund. Ms Rakai further reported that the Staff Provident Fund had 185 participants as of 31 December 2023, and that the SPFMB convened formally four times during the same year.

**275. The Council took note of the 2023 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA, contained in C/27/7 and decided to submit it to the Assembly for consideration at its fifteenth session.**

**e. Matters related to Ethics**

**i. Report of the Ethics Advisory Board (C/27/9)**

276. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board, the United Arab Emirates, represented by H.E. Dr Nawal Al Hosany, delivered the Report of the Ethics Advisory Board (EAB) on behalf of EAB members, Germany, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States of America. She recalled, at the outset, that the EAB was established through Decision A/3/DC/6 to assist with implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest of IRENA (A/2/13), which was adopted by the second session of the Assembly, through Decision A/2/DC/7. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board informed that pursuant to Paragraph 2 of the Terms of Reference for the Ethics Advisory Board (A/3/17), the EAB reports annually to the Council. She referred the Council to the full Report of the Ethics Advisory Board, contained in document C/27/9, and provided a summary of the main points of the Report.

277. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board reported that the EAB met several times during the period to discuss reforms to IRENA's management and oversight institutions and policies, and informed the Council that details on the outcome of these discussions can be found in the Review of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest, developed by the EAB, contained in document C/27/8.

278. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board stated that the Secretariat informed the EAB that IRENA's former Ethics Officer and Chief of Budget was promoted to the position of AMS Director, and that the Secretariat had retained a consultant to fill the position of Ethics Officer. She highlighted that, given that IRENA's Code of Conduct specifies that the Ethics Officer should be a staff position, the EAB requested information from the Secretariat on its plans to fill this position with a full-time staff member.

279. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board informed the Council that two allegations of misconduct were brought to the attention of the EAB, including a complaint pertaining to the Director-General. She reported that the EAB recommended to the Secretariat that it retains an external investigator to investigate the claims, given that IRENA does not have an independent investigative capacity for such cases. She informed that, following this, IRENA retained an external investigator, OSACO Group, and shared the investigator's redacted report with the EAB on 16 May 2024. The EAB requested that IRENA share the redacted report with the full Council, as per international best practice.

280. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board stated that the EAB noted that the external investigator recommended several management reforms, and the EAB strongly recommended that IRENA take the necessary steps to address these. She further underlined that the EAB also requests updates to be presented to the Council from IRENA, on the Secretariat's plans to implement these reforms.

281. Given that IRENA did not have a policy on executive head misconduct in place at the time of the allegation or investigation, the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board informed that the EAB recommends developing a policy on executive head misconduct, which should be approved by the Assembly. She added that such a policy should ensure that any future allegations include Member State approval of the terms of reference of an external investigation, and a Member State's review of the final report, which is consistent with similar policies at other international organisations.

282. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board informed that the EAB received a second allegation pertaining to financial and management issues. She reported that the EAB will refer those allegations to the IRENA management for its review. She stressed that, as noted in document C/27/8, the EAB supports IRENA's development of mechanisms to receive complaints of alleged misconduct and to conduct investigations into any future allegations, and underlined that such a mechanism should be independent and adhere to international best standards of practice. She stated that the Ethics Advisory Board puts these recommendations before the Council for its consideration, and looks forward to feedback from the Council.

283. A delegation commended the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board as well as the members of the Ethics Advisory board on the presentation and Report. Emphasising that ethics is the basic requirement of any international organisation, the delegation expressed that they fully endorse the rationale in moving forward, of development policies for IRENA as an international organisation. Noting that the Agency is now fifteen years old and has now moved on from its teens, becoming an adult, the delegation expressed the need for the Agency to behave like adults and have the proper mechanisms in place, reiterating full endorsement of the Report of the Ethics Advisory Board.

**284. The Council took note of the oral report of the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board on the Board's activities, as well as the Report of the Ethics Advisory Board, contained in document C/27/9 and agreed to all the recommendations therein.**

**ii. Review of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA (C/27/8)**

285. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board, the United Arab Emirates, represented by H.E. Dr Nawal Al Hosany, informed that the Review of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA is presented in full to the Council in document C/27/8, and provided a few highlights from the document.

286. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board reported on the recommendation of the Ethics Advisory Board (EAB) that the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA be reviewed and reformed, given the EAB's analysis that the current policy is too vague and needs strengthening.

287. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board stated the EAB's observation that the Agency is engaging new stakeholders and as such, the framing of a conflict of interest needs to be expanded to all areas where conflicts of interest may arise. She elaborated that IRENA receives money not only from core contributions from Members, but also from new funding arrangements such as Funds, UN partnership agreements and engagement with the private sector, among others, which are all new sources of funding that were not present when the Policy was initially drafted. She stated that, to make the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest more fit for purpose, the EAB proposes undertaking a review of this Policy in conjunction with relevant stakeholders in the IRENA Secretariat, to put in place the necessary safeguards to ensure that the core principles and functions of the Policy are met.

288. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board highlighted that the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest does not clearly define ethical misconduct, and that the EAB proposes that the revised Policy clearly spell out violations of the Policy, including failure to disclose or remedy conflicts of interest. She added that the revised Policy should also spell out investigative and disciplinary procedures in the event of such violations. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board further highlighted that, while whistleblowing has been discussed at several Council meetings in the past, to date, there is no policy to protect whistleblowers. In this regard, she stated that the EAB recommends that IRENA develop an anti-retaliation policy for the protection of whistleblowers.

289. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board reported that the EAB has also identified several gaps in IRENA's management and regulatory framework, specifically regarding a lack of additional management policies and of reporting and investigative mechanisms in the event of misconduct. She added that, in reference to the management policies at other UN and non-UN international organisations, it is the view of the EAB that IRENA should have in place, at a minimum, a Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest; a Staff Code of Conduct; provisions for proper financial conduct, including management of funds and antifraud measures; a policy on misconduct with clear definitions and zero tolerance for prohibited behaviour; a whistleblower protection policy; and a policy on executive head misconduct.

290. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board stated that, to the EAB's knowledge, IRENA only has the first and the second policies in place, and that none of the policies in place contain explicit definitions or procedures for handling prohibited behaviour. She expressed the view of the EAB that existing policies should be revised to include more specificity, and that missing policies should be drafted with a view to achieving such specificity, adding that all policies should also contain a clause with parameters for their periodic review and revision if necessary.

291. The Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board highlighted that, in addition to this policy gap, IRENA does not currently have the capacity to receive confidential and anonymous complaints of misconduct, nor does it have the capacity to investigate such complaints. She reported that the EAB sees this as a significant gap, and that the EAB recommends that IRENA develop such a reporting mechanism and investigative capacity.

292. In moving forward, the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board invited the Council to consider and endorse the preliminary reflections presented by the EAB, including for the Secretariat, in consultation with the EAB, to review the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest and provide a more detailed recommendation to the twenty-eighth Council, ahead of the fifteenth session of the

Assembly. She stated that the Secretariat should also work with the EAB to develop a whistleblower protection/anti-retaliation policy, and address any other gaps identified in the review process. Noting that the EAB acknowledges that the Secretariat has begun to undertake management reforms, she stated that the EAB would welcome additional updates from the Secretariat to the full Council in a timely manner.

293. The Director-General welcomed the recommendations from the Ethics Advisory Board, and stated that the Secretariat will work on the implementation of those recommendations. The Director-General recalled that the office is staffed by four people, with two professional staff members and two assistants, and advised that some of this work may require the use of some consultants, in addition to the consultant that has already been engaged to work on these matters. He stated that the Secretariat will attempt to do everything possible, and also present the Membership with a clear understanding of what would eventually be needed for fulfilling all of the requests, and affirmed that the Secretariat will follow up on the matter.

**294. The Council took note of the Review of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA, contained in document C/27/8 and the recommendations put forward by the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board.**

**295. The Council requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board, to review the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA as outlined in document C/27/8, with the view to provide more detailed recommendations to the Council at its twenty-eighth meeting, and in preparation for the consideration of this matter at the fifteenth session of the Assembly.**

**296. The Council agreed that the Secretariat works with the Ethics Advisory Board to develop a whistleblower protection and anti-retaliation policy, as well as to address any gaps identified in the review process, contained in document C/27/8.**

#### **Agenda Item 9: Report of the Open-Ended Group on the Establishment of Regional Offices of IRENA**

297. The Chair of the Council introduced the item and informed that the Open-Ended Group on the Establishment of Regional Offices of IRENA held its third meeting on 23 May 2024. The Chair invited Dr Mohamed El Khayat, Executive Chairman of the New and Renewable Energy Authority of Egypt and Facilitator of the Open-Ended Group to report on the outcome of the third meeting of the Open-Ended Group (OEG).

298. Dr Mohamed El Khayat recalled that the twenty-sixth Council meeting, in October 2023, took note of his report of the second meeting of the OEG and agreed to continue the discussion on this matter under the same umbrella with a view to report on the deliberations at the next meeting of the Council. He reported that the third meeting, held in a virtual format, was attended by 30 participants representing 20 IRENA Members and thanked them for the feedback and insights provided.

299. Dr El Khayat outlined that the third meeting focused on providing views and feedback on open questions and issues raised by Members. He informed the Council that a detailed summary of the discussions at the third meeting of the OEG was prepared, with the support of the Secretariat, and transmitted to the Membership as part of the documentation package for this Council meeting.

300. Dr El Khayat emphasised on the open and frank nature of discussions in the recent OEG meeting, noting that the insights and opinions shared will contribute valuable elements to the Council's ongoing deliberations on the matter.

301. Dr El Khayat also highlighted that, in response to the presentation on the issues and open questions relating to the regional offices, participants expressed their expectations for detailed information from the Secretariat on various issues, including the roles and responsibilities of potential regional offices, definitions for regions, and a breakdown of new activities proposed that are not currently outlined or undertaken in the scope of work of the IRENA Headquarters in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the IRENA Innovation and Technology Center (IITC) in Germany, and in the current Work Programme.

302. Dr El Khayat reported that Members also stressed the need for an agreement on the definition, framework, and guiding principles for potential regional offices, before the discussion moves forward to identifying specific locations. He also informed that Members emphasised the need for comprehensive analyses and assessments, including the proposed administrative, budgetary, and institutional framework necessary for establishing such offices.

303. Dr El Khayat further reported that a suggestion was made, considering the Agency's limited resources, to assign IRENA Regional Focal Points, who could be beneficial, as a first step, in supporting Members to address regional energy issues effectively and to facilitate collaboration with both regional and national entities.

304. Dr El Khayat informed that participants raised concerns regarding the absence of a comprehensive assessment from the IRENA Secretariat, stressing the importance of having such an assessment prior to engaging in further discussions on this matter. He also reported that one participant questioned the effectiveness of continuing the OEG meetings without a specific purpose and tangible expected outcomes, particularly in light of the absence of a comprehensive assessment.

305. Dr El Khayat highlighted that the request was made by one participant for an update on the number of participants in attendance at the third meeting of the OEG, which was aimed at assessing and understanding the level of interest among the Membership in discussing this matter. He mentioned that it was noted that participation in the first and second meetings of the OEG were higher in comparison to the third meeting, which could indicate a lesser interest from Members in discussing this matter.

306. Dr El Khayat reported one participant noted the timeliness of the discussion on the role of an IRENA regional office at the twenty-sixth meeting of the Council, and stressed that the establishment of a pilot project could serve as a test bed on the viability of a regional office in the longer term.

307. He further informed the Council that one participant, while appreciative of the idea of a pilot project, expressed the view that it is not an appropriate proposal as the meaning of the concept of "pilot" is not clear and that the proposal that is being discussed is on the viability of establishing IRENA regional offices. He reported that the participant further stated that all elements proposed as part of the pilot are already covered by either the IRENA Headquarters or the Bonn office and stressed the reputational impact that may arise from a temporary pilot project.

308. In concluding his remarks, Dr El Khayat emphasised the frank, honest and fruitful discussion at the third meeting of the OEG and expressed his hope that the Council will address the clusters

of issues highlighted in his report and will request the Secretariat to provide information on areas needing further clarification, for consideration at future meetings of the Council. Dr El Khayat also invited the Council to share its guidance on convening a meeting of the OEG to discuss and review information and assessment provided by the Secretariat on the open questions and issues raised before it is presented to the Council.

309. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the report by the Facilitator on the outcome of the third meeting of the Open-Ended Group, noting that it accurately reflects the overall sentiment of the meeting.

310. Delegations stressed the need for a clear roadmap, identifying the steps and timelines to advance the advance discussions, a comprehensive assessment and thorough evaluation of the implications of establishing regional offices, particularly financial and administrative implications and adjustments. Delegations also requested further information on the selection criteria and clear description of activities proposed for regional offices and their added value, before making decisions, to avoid potential overlap with existing activities. Delegations also underlined that, since the initial discussion on this matter, Members have raised several relevant questions and shared legitimate concerns that remained unanswered, including how potential regional offices could be strategically embedded into the Agency's current work programme. One delegation stressed the unique role of the Agency in facilitating progress and discussions in a way that can enable informed and timely decisions by Members. Delegations also underlined the impact of establishing regional offices on the Agency's budget as an important consideration.

311. One delegation noted that the current structure of the Agency, namely the Headquarters in Abu Dhabi as well as the centre in Bonn and the office in New York, are performing well both geographically and functionally. Another delegation underlined the assessment of the ability as well as the necessity of establishing a regional office and to clarify its roles and responsibilities as the current priority.

312. One delegation emphasised that IRENA must remain agile to support collective energy transition goals, meeting emerging needs and implementing appropriate measures. Another delegation noted, from discussions at the Open-Ended Group and Council meetings, a strong desire for IRENA to deepen collaboration on energy transitions with its Members and across regions, considering the urgent global efforts to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency by 2030. One delegation underscored that there was no consensus on the creation of a pilot project and expressed its openness and support to exploring the assignment of regional focal points, leveraging IRENA's existing experience with its current regional focal points as well as host countries' feedback to develop the best approach for the placement of such regional focal points.

313. Delegations expressed the challenges and concerns regarding the appropriateness of establishing a regional office as a pilot project at this stage, considering the lack of a thorough assessment of relevant elements. One delegation recalled the UAE Consensus as a landmark achievement in the goals of tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency by 2030 and highlighted IRENA's role in monitoring global progress towards those goals. The delegation further stated that the proposed IRENA regional offices can contribute substantially to these global efforts through regional advocacy efforts and publications, as well as development of bankable renewable energy projects in the region, especially for regions facing rising energy demand but lagging in infrastructure financing. The delegation also shared its appreciation of the feedback during the OEG discussions on the role of an IRENA regional office, including on a pilot project to serve as a testbed on the viability and benefits of a regional office in the long term. The delegation suggested that the pilot office could be supported through voluntary contributions

from interested Members and stakeholders, with its outcomes and deliverables reviewed after a two-year period.

314. While agreeing with concerns about the process and financial commitments, one delegation underscored the need for IRENA's greater presence in Southeast Asia and emphasised the importance of considering the outcomes of establishing a regional office in Southeast Asia. Highlighting the region's critical role in achieving climate goals, the delegation further noted its projected second-highest growth in energy demand until 2050 and significant CO<sub>2</sub> emissions growth due to fossil fuel reliance. They stressed that IRENA's expertise is crucial for addressing these challenges and added that a regional office would enhance communication and connections, particularly for IRENA Members in that part of the world.

315. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to Egypt as Facilitator of the Open-Ended Group and to Members for the feedback on the progress made to date. The Director-General note that the interventions highlighted the lack of clarity regarding the decision on establishing a regional office, emphasising the need for either commitment or abandonment of the idea. He referred to the recent announcement regarding the establishment of an IEA office in Singapore and noted that some IRENA Members, which are also members of the IEA, have agreed to open a regional center in a non-member country. The Director-General stated that the proposal from Singapore, an IRENA Member, focuses on Southeast Asia, a region that is critical to the achievement of the Paris Agreement, in addition to the Africa region.

316. The Director-General affirmed the Secretariat's readiness to support Members' requests and concerns. The Director-General also suggested that Members consider whether a pilot project in a coal-dependent region could enhance the Agency's capacity to address regional issues. He referred to the Caribbean's Center of Excellence, highlighting the potential value of IRENA's presence to provide necessary support and emphasised that in some cases, physical presence may also bring additional value. The Director-General informed that the Secretariat would remain attentive to Members' guidance and is prepared to provide additional elements to address their concerns and requests. The Director-General added that the concept of an IRENA regional office is not novel and was first considered during the establishment of the Agency. He further noted that although Singapore has recently proposed this idea, it was originally envisioned by the Preparatory Committee. The Director-General affirmed that ultimately, the decision to establish regional offices lies with IRENA Members through the Assembly.

317. In addition to the interventions made, the Chair reiterated the clusters of issues highlighted by the Facilitator of the Open-Ended Group in his report, to be addressed by the Secretariat, as follows:

- Roles and responsibilities of potential regional offices and a breakdown of new activities that are not outlined or undertaken in the current scope of work of the IRENA Headquarters in the UAE and at the Bonn Office, and in the current Work Programme.
- Definition, framework, and guiding principles of potential for potential regional offices, including comprehensive analysis and assessments on the proposed administrative, budgetary, and institutional framework necessary for establishing such offices, amongst others.
- Assignment of IRENA Regional Focal Points to address energy issues and to collaborate with regional and national entities.

**318. The Council took note of the Report by the Facilitator of the Open-Ended Group (OEG) on the Establishment of Regional Offices of IRENA and the interventions made.**

319. **The Council also agreed to request the Secretariat to provide further information on the open questions and issues raised, contained in the Report of the Open-Ended Group to Council, for presentation at the next meeting of the Open-Ended Group to be held prior to Council at its twenty-eighth meeting.**

320. **The Council also invited the Secretariat to provide further information and clarity on the process, including a roadmap, which identifies the steps and timelines to move the discussion forward.**

#### **Agenda Item 10: Establishment of the IRENA Liaison Office Vienna**

321. The Chair of the Council introduced the item and informed that a request was submitted by Austria to add an item on the provisional agenda of Council entitled 'Establishment of the IRENA Liaison Office Vienna'. The Chair invited Austria to present its proposal on the matter.

322. Austria expressed gratitude for the inclusion of this item on the Council's agenda and highlighted its active role in establishing IRENA. This included participation in subgroups of the Preparatory Committee and hosting meetings in Austria. The delegation recalled that Austria, along with three other Members, applied to host the IRENA Headquarters, which was ultimately awarded to the United Arab Emirates by acclamation after informal consultations.

323. The delegation also mentioned that, in addition to the decision on hosting the Headquarters of IRENA in Abu Dhabi, there was also a decision to establish an Innovation Center in Bonn, Germany and a Liaison Office in Vienna, Austria. The delegation also affirmed that although Austria signed the IRENA Statute at the founding conference in Bonn, the establishment of a Liaison Office in Vienna was delayed due to Austria's ratification process. The delegation stated that Austria is a Member of IRENA since January 2021 and affirmed its readiness to operationalise the decision. The delegation stated that Austria has maintained close communication line with the IRENA Secretariat regarding the matter and mentioned that both its international legal advisors and the IRENA Secretariat concur that the decision concerning the delays in establishing the office remains valid, pending its implementation.

324. The delegation informed that the Liaison Office aims to strengthen institutional links between IRENA and key institutions based in Vienna, broaden and deepen a network of organisations in the field of renewable energy, and mainstream renewable energy discussions without relocating work from Abu Dhabi or Bonn. The delegation further affirmed that Austria would fund the office without affecting IRENA's core budget and noted that discussions with the IRENA Secretariat are progressing, and updates will be provided to the Membership in the coming months.

325. Delegations expressed gratitude to Austria for the significant support for IRENA and for their presentation of an interesting proposal that deserves thorough examination, noting Vienna's status as a recognised centre for multilateral organisations. The delegation further mentioned that, after the decision to establish the liaison office in Vienna was put on hold, IRENA was granted observer status at the United Nations, leading to the establishment of an observer office in New York. The delegation further stated that the Observer office in New York is aimed to improve communication between IRENA, United Nations bodies, and other NGOs in the energy sector.

326. Delegations suggested that careful consideration should be given on how the mandate of the proposed Liaison Office in Vienna will be coordinated in relation to the Observer office in New

York and requested the Secretariat to provide Terms of Reference for both offices to prevent any overlap in their functions. Noting that the role envisaged for the Liaison Office in Vienna may already be fulfilled by the existing Observer office in New York, one delegation supported interventions made for a clear division of roles between the Observer office in New York and the proposed Liaison Office in Vienna, and stressed the importance of fair and equitable geographical distribution of IRENA offices. The delegation further questioned the rationale for establishing a new office in Vienna, given the existing office in the same region, and requested this rationale to be presented to Members.

327. One delegation noted that the expansion of the Agency can strengthen networks, implement programs more efficiently, and advocate more effectively and stated that necessary prerequisites for such expansion have yet to be met. Delegations also emphasised the need for funding requirements as well as long-term commitments of various aspects of the proposed Liaison Office's work, including staffing to ensure sustainability, effectiveness, and independence, in line with offices of intergovernmental organisations. One delegation requested a detailed report on budgetary implications of establishing an additional IRENA office, including on staffing at Professional and General Service levels as well as on travel expenses, to be circulated to Members in a timely manner to enable effective discussion on the topic.

328. The delegation also requested a cost-benefit analysis that considers existing resources, secured commitments, current capacities, including their effectiveness, as well as a prioritisation of the Agency's needs and Members' requests. One delegation raised concerns that establishing new offices, including the proposal for a Liaison Office in Vienna could incur future costs that might impact the organization's finances.

329. Delegations highlighted that there are a number of ongoing discussions regarding establishing IRENA offices in Vienna and other regions, such as Asia and emphasised the important role of the Secretariat in providing clear information to requests for details, including on a holistic examination of the added value of each proposed office, taking into account geographic and programmatic relevance, as these matters are related to all Members, the Agency's mandate, and its strategy and programme implementation.

330. Delegations acknowledged that the Agency's current structure is adequate for its activities, considering its financial situation. One delegation expressed the Latin America and the Caribbean group's interest in engaging in discussions and decisions, should further reflections on this matter be considered and added that without additional information, the Agency's current structure is satisfactory.

331. One delegation acknowledged Austria's request to establish an IRENA Liaison Office in Vienna and noted that this proposal was part of the discussions of the Preparatory Committee in Sharm El-Sheikh, in Egypt and the Work Programme and Budget for 2010. The delegation requested the Secretariat to share relevant documentation and decisions relating to the Liaison Office in Vienna to facilitate a more informed decision. One delegation shared their understanding of the decision to establish the Liaison Office in Vienna had been made previously and suggested, in line other interventions made, that further clarity on this decision relating to the proposed Liaison Office would be beneficial. Another delegation sought clarification regarding the need for a new decision to establish the Liaison Office in Vienna or the implementation of an existing decision made is sufficient.

332. Referring to its intervention during discussions under agenda item 9 and acknowledging the difference between a regional and a liaison office, the delegation emphasised the need for the

Council to consider several important issues before making a decision, such as detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the proposed Liaison office.

333. One delegation requested more information on the proposed Liaison Office in Vienna as well as any future plans for regional offices, so as to ensure that these initiatives do not impose additional costs on the Agency and emphasised the need to prevent any financial burdens to IRENA both now and in the future.

334. After the deliberation by the Council, Austria expressed appreciation for the valuable comments and offered additional clarification on several points raised. In addressing concerns regarding the validity of the decision to establish a Liaison Office in Vienna, the delegation affirmed that the decision had been made years ago and is deemed valid by their legal advisors and the Secretariat. The delegation further affirmed that the implementation of this decision does not require a new decision from the Membership. Regarding concerns about duplication, particularly with the Observer Office in New York, the delegation assured that steps would be taken to avoid redundancy and highlighted that the organisations and agencies in Vienna differ significantly from those in New York, ensuring distinct roles and responsibilities.

335. The delegation stressed that ongoing collaboration with the Secretariat to define the Liaison Office's Terms of Reference as well as on budgetary and staffing arrangements are ongoing with the Secretariat, with further information to be provided at upcoming Council meetings. The delegation also assured that Austria's financial commitment for the Liaison Office will not impact IRENA's core budget.

336. In his reflections, the Director-General emphasised that the Liaison Office in Vienna should not be considered as a Regional Office but rather a Liaison Office aimed at connecting with international organisations based in Vienna. The Director-General also clarified that the office in Bonn does not serve as a regional office, but rather as a division of IRENA located in Bonn.

337. The Director-General acknowledged that the Preparatory Committee of IRENA's suggestion to establish an IRENA Liaison Office in Vienna was put on hold and affirmed that a decision from the Assembly, possibly at its fifteenth session, to reaffirm this recommendation would be necessary. He further acknowledged the need to distinguish the roles and responsibilities of the Observer office in New York and the Liaison Office in Vienna and assured Members that a document outlining this information would be provided. The Director-General concluded by noting the Secretariat's intention to provide further information to clarify that the Liaison Office in Vienna does not duplicate the functions of the New York office and address the comments and requests made by Members.

**338. The Council took note of the oral presentation by Austria and agreed to request Austria and the Secretariat to provide further information on this matter based on interventions made, for consideration of this matter at its twenty-eighth meeting.**

#### **Agenda Item 11: Arrangements for the twenty-eighth meeting of the Council**

339. The Chair noted the Secretariat's proposal to hold the twenty-eighth meeting of the Council on 24-25 October 2024 in-person in Abu Dhabi, with the related meetings of the subsidiary organs, the AFC and the PSC, scheduled to take place on 23 October 2024, in-person in Abu Dhabi.

340. **The Council considered the proposed dates for the twenty-eighth Council and related meetings and agreed that the twenty-eighth meeting of the Council will take place on 24-25 October 2024 with the related meetings of the subsidiary organs on 23 October 2024.**

341. The Chair called upon the Secretariat to propose dates for the Council meetings in 2025, for consideration by the Council at its twenty-eighth meeting.

342. **Following a proposal made by Members, the Council considered and approved the proposed arrangements for the designation of Zimbabwe as Chair and Bangladesh as Vice-Chair of its twenty-eighth meeting**

#### **Agenda Item 12: Any other business**

##### *Council membership process for 2025 and 2026*

343. The Chair invited the Council to take up item 13 – Any Other business and invited Rwanda, in its capacity as President of the fourteenth session of the Assembly, to inform the Council on the arrangements and steps of the Council membership process for 2025 and 2026.

344. Rwanda recalled that the term of the current members of the IRENA Council will come to an end on 31 December 2024 and stated that the fifteenth session of the Assembly of IRENA, scheduled to be held on 12 and 13 January 2025 is expected, among others, to decide on the composition of the 2025-2026 Council. The delegation emphasised the importance of a preparatory and transparent process leading up to the fifteenth session of the Assembly and announced that IRENA members interested in Council membership for the next term would be invited to indicate their interest by 31 July 2024.

345. Rwanda further stated that it requested the four Vice-Presidents of the fourteenth session of the Assembly to act as facilitators for their respective regional groups and collect expressions of interest from their groups to establish a slate of nominations. The delegation informed the Council that additional information on this matter will be circulated to Members in due course, outlining timelines, processes, and relevant provisions of the IRENA Statute and the Assembly's Rules of Procedure governing Council elections. Rwanda concluded by noting that the Council will receive an update on the status of nominations for the 2025-2026 IRENA Council, at its twenty-eighth meeting.

346. **The Council took note of the proposed process for the Council membership for 2025 and 2026 and the deadline for expressions of interest as 31 July 2024.**

##### *Proposal for a note on Executive level Succession Plan*

347. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), noting that the Director-General's current term will conclude in 2027, emphasised the importance of proactively planning his succession to ensure a seamless transition and continuity of the Director-General's legacy. The delegation reiterated its call for timely succession planning, particularly at senior levels of the Agency, to ensure institutional stability. The delegation underscored the Council and Assembly's responsibility in preparing for the Executive level succession plan and stressed the need for clarity and transparency in the process.

348. Referring to document C/22/INF/4, which outlines the Director-General re-election process, the delegation requested a similar comprehensive information note guiding the election of the next Director-General of IRENA, including relevant timelines and procedures. The delegation requested information regarding the creation and responsibilities of the Director-General Selection Committee (DGSC), suggesting that these aspects be covered in the information document to be presented for consideration at the twenty-eighth Council meeting, to ensure all Members understand their roles in facilitating a smooth election process for the next Director-General of IRENA.

349. One delegation expressed support for the proposal by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) regarding the timely initiation of the information note regarding the selection process of the next Director-General of IRENA and emphasised the critical importance of starting it promptly. The delegation also invited the Secretariat to ensure that all required documentation is provided to Members without delay.

**350. The Council took note of the proposal by the United Arab Emirates to request the Secretariat to provide an information document outlining the relevant timelines and processes regarding the selection process of the next Director-General of IRENA, for consideration at its twenty-eighth meeting.**

*Proposal by the United States of America for an agenda item on norms or practices*

351. The United States of America expressed appreciation for the productive and enlightening meeting of the Council, commended the Council Chair, Zimbabwe, and Council Vice-Chair, Bangladesh, for their effective facilitation and thanked the Director-General and Secretariat staff for the work and arrangements made.

352. The United States shared its appreciation that every IRENA Member can play a significant role and acknowledged the progress made during the Council meeting. The United States noted the Director-General's cautionary remarks on IRENA's limited resources and voiced concerns regarding IRENA's future, particularly regarding resource constraints and staff workload. The delegation stressed the importance for Members in setting realistic expectations relative to the Agency's budget and expressed appreciation for IRENA's results-oriented approach.

353. The delegation referred to procedural matters from the fourteenth Assembly session, where consensus was blocked, and proposed discussing norms or practices to maintain IRENA as an inclusive and technically focused Agency. The delegation shared its plans to consult with the Council Chair to include an item on this matter in the provisional agenda of the next meeting of the Council, with the aim of preventing similar issues from occurring in the future.

354. One delegation supported the proposal by the United States of America to include a discussion at the next Council meeting on ways to ensure IRENA remains an inclusive organisation focused on the deployment of renewables. Delegations expressed concerns regarding the current situation involving the President and Vice-Presidents of the fifteenth Assembly and echoed the United States of America's proposal to include this matter as an item for discussion at the next Council meeting.

**355. The Council took note of the proposal by the United States of America to include, in the provisional Agenda of its twenty-eighth meeting, an item relating to norms or practices to maintain IRENA as an inclusive and technically focused Agency.**

*Proposal by Antigua and Barbuda for an item on the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)*

356. Antigua and Barbuda highlighted the success of the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and emphasised IRENA's crucial role in supporting its implementation moving forward. The delegation expressed gratitude for IRENA's significant support during the conference, particularly noting the Director-General's active participation and IRENA's successful High-level side event. The delegation emphasised the importance of ensuring IRENA remains effective and fit for purpose amid challenges faced by SIDS, advocating for IRENA's initiatives and work to move into tangible impact.

357. The delegation highlighted the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative as a notable example of this effort, which has already begun mapping the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and developing implementation indicators following the conclusion of the conference. The delegation underscored the proactive approach of the Agency and the SIDS Lighthouses, highlighting ongoing efforts to support the Center of Excellence coming out of the ABAS. The delegation highlighted the importance of the implementation of the ABAS for agencies such as IRENA and suggested the consideration of an item at Council or Assembly, in collaboration with the SIDS Lighthouses, to discuss the conference's success and the ABAS implementation progress. The delegation concluded by expressing its readiness to contribute further to discussions in the Council and Assembly on how IRENA can effectively support the ABAS implementation.

**358. The Council took note of the proposal by Antigua and Barbuda to include an item at Council or Assembly on the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and its progress, in collaboration with the SIDS Lighthouses.**

#### **Agenda Item 12: Closing of the meeting**

359. In his closing remarks, the Director-General reflected on the quality of work and contributions to the twenty-seventh Council meeting, and expressed his appreciation to the government of the United Arab Emirates as Host Country, as well as Members, staff, and interpreters. He highlighted the presentations that were delivered at the Council meeting, which tracked the three barriers to overcome, as well as the importance of SIDS and the injustice of inequality largely present in the world, and expressed his understanding that these were very much appreciated by Members. He pointed out that the request by the COP28 Presidency for IRENA to track the outcome of COP28 gives the clear sense that international communities are looking to the Agency for data that is by definition neutral, and added that there is still a need to engage with the designated Presidencies of COP29 and COP30 on this. He reiterated that IRENA is an Agency where everyone has the possibility to present concerns of their country, and as the only energy space that is open to everyone, we must preserve this.

360. On the intervention made by Antigua and Barbuda, the Director-General assured that IRENA continues to give priority to SIDS and LDCs, and informed that the Agency is trying to organise its work, activities and priorities as best as possible, to change the quality of life by moving beyond an academic perspective, to capacity building that makes a difference on the ground.

361. The Director-General cautioned that the upcoming twenty-eighth meeting of the Council and the fifteenth session of the Assembly will be the last occasion to avoid any stalling in the work of the Agency, emphasising that no one organisation can survive the cutting of its management and social ties. He expressed that it would be difficult to provide the service that Members have requested, because responding to those requests would be more than what the Agency is already

doing without stretching capacities. In this regard, he stated that the Secretariat will come with a plan for this big step that could help the Agency deal with the difficulty, noting that this should be an exceptional proposal, because the situation is exceptional. He expressed the hope that the next Council meeting could have a strategic approach towards trying to understand how the Agency can perform better and reach new heights, if possible.

362. On the Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the fifteenth session of the Assembly, the Director-General informed that the Secretariat had provided the Membership with some elements of reading of the Rules of Procedure, and invited Members to reach out to the Secretariat where further clarification is needed. He stated that he is sure that the Membership will find a compromise to the election of the President and Vice-President, and added that while he remains ready to help in all ways and means, this process is mainly the responsibility of the Membership.

363. In her closing remarks, the Chair of the Council, Dr Gloria Magombo expressed that it is a real privilege for the Republic of Zimbabwe to serve as Chair of the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council, and expressed immense gratitude on behalf of the government as well as on her behalf for being entrusted with this responsibility. She extended special gratitude to the United Arab Emirates for graciously hosting the Council.

364. Dr Magombo recalled that the Council had several important and insightful discussions over the past few days, spanning issues relating to the implementation of the current Work Programme, the scaling up of investments in renewables, as well as the de-risking of investments towards the achievement of SDG7. She added that the Council discussed issues of the budget, which Members believe are quite critical for the wellbeing of the Agency. She further highlighted that Members believe that human resources remain at the core of the success of IRENA, and must support the Agency to ensure that it does have a clear succession plan, stating that a mass exodus of all leaders at the same time would take the Agency back.

365. Dr Magombo emphasised the collective responsibility to ensure that the targets on SDG 7, 1.5°C and net zero by 2050 for all countries is delivered, and highlighted that IRENA's work in coordinating and providing Members with the necessary information and data is key, and has helped Members move tremendous steps ahead. She recalled that Members also gained insight on IRENA's activities in industry driven partnerships for the accelerated energy transition, and underlined that the energy transition cannot be achieved without everyone being on board, and engaging with both the utilities and industries is key to ensuring that we are able to meet the net zero ambition that we aspire towards.

366. Reflecting on the productive discussions addressing important administrative and institutional matters, Dr Magombo thanked all Members for their active engagement and constructive feedback, which highlights the importance that IRENA's global Membership places on the work and impact of the Agency both internally as well as externally. She recalled that the Council came together to agree on the next steps across a range of important issues, and expressed that she looks forward to working with Antigua and Barbuda, as Rapporteur, in finalising the summary report of discussions at this Council meeting.

367. Dr Magombo expressed the hope that Members continue to exchange their diverse views and perspectives, and come together under the shared vision of ensuring a just and inclusive energy transition, towards shared prosperity that encompasses all. She expressed her gratitude to Bangladesh, as Vice Chair of the Council, Antigua and Barbuda, as Rapporteur, the Director-General, Deputy Director-General, and the Secretariat, as well as all those that helped to make the twenty-seventh Council meeting a success, particularly the interpreters as well as the young students from the 'IRENA Student Trainee Programme to Support Governing Body Meetings'

for their hard work, emphasising that they are the future, and it is good to have them at the Council meeting.

**368. The Chair declared the twenty-seventh meeting of the Council closed.**