

Twenty-third meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 24-25 May 2022

REPORT

OF THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

OF THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

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

1. The twenty-third meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was held in a hybrid format in Abu Dhabi on 24-25 May 2022. The meeting was attended by 19 Council members: Algeria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, El Salvador, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Somalia, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe, as well as 8 alternates: China, Colombia, Egypt, Nigeria, Switzerland, Türkiye, Tuvalu and United Kingdom. Also, in attendance were delegations of 70 other IRENA Members and 5 other States in Accession and other UN Member States.

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the meeting

2. The Chair of the twenty-second meeting of the Council of IRENA, Japan, represented by H.E. Mr Odawara Kiyoshi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, opened the meeting and expressed his sincere condolences to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on the passing of its President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The Council observed a minute of silence in his honour.

3. H.E. Mr Odawara Kiyoshi expressed his gratitude to Director-General Francesco La Camera, and Zimbabwe as Vice-Chair of the twenty-second meeting, as well as to all Members for their support of Japan as outgoing Chair and for their continued support of IRENA's work.

4. H.E. Mr Odawara Kiyoshi addressed the surge in energy prices being exacerbated by the Ukraine crisis and highlighted the importance of balancing energy security and energy transition. Referring to the World Energy Transitions Outlook (WETO) which states that efficiently distributed renewable energy systems can help combat climate change and improve energy security, he noted that the energy transition should be tailored to each country's circumstances and that the future of energy includes ensuring the availability of key resources to achieve decarbonisation, such as critical mineral resources for manufacturing renewable energy equipment, solar panels and storage batteries, and for the future envisaged for hydrogen. In this regard, he mentioned IRENA's upcoming in-depth analysis of the international hydrogen trade, and he emphasised the importance of innovation towards expanding the scale and shape of international trade in 2030 and 2050. He highlighted that IRENA is best suited to hold discussions on the energy transition as it has the largest Membership of any international energy organisation and plays to its strength in the discussions on securing a stable supply of key resources and innovation to achieve decarbonisation. In this regard, he welcomed the establishment of the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition and noted that discussions will facilitate knowledge exchange on important areas for consideration, including investment expansion, transparency in markets, protection of the human rights of mine workers and environmental considerations. Reflecting on the changing energy situation over the past year, he highlighted the significant role of IRENA in providing concrete roadmaps for energy transitions and supporting Members in navigating the evolving energy landscape.

Agenda Item 2. Organisation of work

a. Election of officials

5. **The Council elected by acclamation Uruguay, represented by Mr Walter Verri, Deputy Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining, as Chair, and Norway, represented by H.E. Mr Sten Arne Rosnes, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Norway to the United Arab Emirates, as Vice-Chair of the twenty-third meeting of the Council.**

6. **As proposed by the Chair of the twenty-third meeting of the Council, Somalia, represented by Mr Omar Shurie, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Advisor to the Minister of Energy and Water Resources, was appointed as Rapporteur of the twenty-third meeting of the Council.**

7. The Chair of the twenty-third meeting of the Council of IRENA, Mr Walter Verri, in his opening remarks, conveyed his condolences to the United Arab Emirates as well as his support to the newly appointed President, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. He expressed his appreciation to the outgoing Council Chair and Vice-Chair, and he thanked the UAE for its hospitality. He affirmed that Uruguay remains determined to increase efforts towards achieving the second stage of energy transition, with an emphasis on decarbonisation in transport and industry sectors and the development of a green hydrogen economy. He underscored the role of IRENA in providing solutions to achieve sustainable development and noted the increased relevance of the Agency and the need to accelerate its work, with the energy crisis being added to the existing urgent challenges. The Chair advised that IRENA must prioritise a long-term strategy to solidify its leadership role at a global level whereby Members have the responsibility to reflect this ambition in deliberations and give direction to the work of the Agency. In this context, he invited Members to consider the agenda items on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 and the Presentation of the Director-General, and to contribute to an effective debate towards strengthening the objectives of the Agency.

8. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, welcomed delegations, on behalf of the host country, to the twenty-third meeting of the Council. She acknowledged the minute of silence in commemoration of the late Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and mentioned his prominent legacy on sustainability, energy diversification, environmentalism, and human, social and economic growth and empowerment in the UAE being forwarded to his successor, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a strong advocate of sustainability and renewable energy solutions, who will continue to build on the foundations laid during this critical decade of action.

9. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany stressed that the opportunity exists to set future generations on a path towards long-term sustainable economic growth, to oversee a just and inclusive global energy transition, and to ensure that renewables power tomorrow's energy system. She further stressed the once in a lifetime opportunity to make green finance the norm, and to develop knowledge, technologies and innovation to limit global warming to 1.5°C by pursuing a future powered by renewables. She cautioned that there is no time to wait for the implementation of existing tools to avoid increased uncertainties. Highlighting the UAE's awareness of this unique and complex situation, she noted that the country is already home to three of the largest and lowest cost solar power plants, placing it on track to exceed 9 GW of clean energy capacity by 2025. She referred to the Expo 2020 in Dubai in October 2021 where the UAE became the first country in the Middle

East and North Africa to launch a net-zero by 2050 strategic initiative, under which USD 160 billion of investments will be channelled to develop a robust pipeline of local talent and advanced technologies in hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage to enable the UAE to cement its leading role in the hydrocarbon economy, and towards building the most efficient energy system in the world. Recognising the critical importance of international partnerships in achieving this goal, she emphasised IRENA's role as the nexus of knowledge and renewable innovation and a natural partner of the UAE in developing projects that deliver value to communities and societies, especially Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In this regard, she referred to the launch of the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAf) Platform at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow, initiated to help deploy 1.5 GW of renewable energy generation and storage by 2030 in developing economies, as well as the collaboration on the UAE-Caribbean Renewable Energy Fund and the UAE-Pacific Partnership Fund towards renewable energy generation projects in SIDS across the Caribbean and Pacific islands, valued at USD 100 million.

10. H.E. Dr Al-Hosany underlined that such ongoing partnerships and international collaboration will elevate the partnership for COP 27 in Egypt in 2022 and COP 28 in UAE in 2023. In this regard, she noted that COP 28 will provide a crucial opportunity for the UAE, IRENA and its Membership to advance the energy transition continuum on the world's biggest climate action stage. She further stressed that working together will deliver a consultative COP that will include the youth and civil society, and where the public and private sector can join forces to tackle the challenges – a COP where government, policy and decision-makers around the world convene to accelerate action and secure the climate-energy nexus. She urged Members to bear in mind the opportunities for shared prosperity on the planet.

11. The Director-General expressed his condolences to the UAE and its people, and he thanked the UAE for facilitating the hosting of the meeting. He welcomed the 300 delegates, representing 100 Members, and expressed his appreciation to the outgoing Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council while congratulating Uruguay and Norway on their role as Chair and Vice-Chair of the twenty-third meeting of the Council. He affirmed that the global IRENA family comprised of 166 countries and the EU with 17 States in Accession, will be joined by Papua New Guinea that recently ratified the IRENA Statute and will become the 168th Member shortly. He noted that to secure the lives and livelihoods of billions, the planet is deserving of a more resilient, inclusive and equal world which demands the concerted action of each Member over the next few years to reach the goals as set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12. In his reference to the report of the World Meteorological Organization on the “State of the Global Climate 2021”, the Director-General noted that climate change is not a distant problem for future generations, with extreme climate and weather events in the past few years having a profound impact on the global energy system that overflows into different sectors and the everyday lives of people without regard for the level of development, and which is further compounded by the crises stemming from the conflict and the persistent COVID-19 pandemic. He underscored the current unanimous recognition of IRENA's long-standing sentiment that renewable based energy transitions are the sole dominant avenue to simultaneously tackle multiple priorities, and advised on the need for a laser focus on solutions that can be deployed at speed and scale. He reiterated the priorities to achieve universal access, improve energy security, and create new jobs in industries whilst remaining on the 1.5°C pathway, and he relayed the UN Secretary-General's strong call to accelerate the deployment of renewables. He pointed out that the WETO reflects inadequate progress across all energy usage despite the promising commitments to enhance Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) at COP 26.

13. He alerted that the release of the *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report (2022)* will reflect the poor progress in realising the pledge, particularly in areas where it is most needed, and he noted a visible increase in the risks of pursuing fast, short-term solutions. He affirmed that the WETO charts the fastest path to emission reduction that prioritises existing and potentially viable solutions and positions efficiency and electrification as primary drivers enabled by renewable power, green hydrogen, and sustainable modern bioenergy. He concluded that the WETO places justice and fairness at the head of planning and action to positively impact all once the speed and scale of the transition is accelerated immediately and dramatically, which will require extraordinary levels of international cooperation, thus underlining the work of the Council as advancements are made on the implementation of the present Work Programme.

14. The Director-General stated that the next strategic cycle will define the role of the Agency in the global landscape until 2027 and that a series of institutional and administrative issues need to be addressed to enable programmatic delivery, as well as to prepare for COP 27 and COP 28. He noted that COP 27 – with a focus on Africa – will deliver an opportunity to unify work and connect all parts of the world. He reiterated the shortness of time and noted that IRENA is not seeking to replace fuels but to create a new energy system that underpins a more inclusive, resilient, and equitable world, for which the Agency must play a vital role to realise this critical mission.

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

b. Adoption of the agenda (C/23/L.1)

16. The Chair introduced the Provisional Agenda (C/23/L.1). One delegation requested the agenda to include ‘Exchange of National Experiences’ given that energy security challenges are currently at the core of all international discussions, underlining that this would enable Members to specifically exchange views on national policies and challenges on the energy transformation. It was also noted that this would alleviate the time constraint allocated for interventions under other agenda items.

17. The Council considered and adopted the Agenda, with the inclusion of Exchange of National Experiences under item 4 (C/23/1/Rev.1).

18. After the adoption of the agenda, the Chair outlined the arrangements for interventions and technical elements for participants attending through the virtual platform. He also requested Members to adhere to the established time limit of three minutes for interventions. He announced that the Vice-Chair, H.E. Mr Sten Arne Rosnes, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Norway to the UAE will be chairing the agenda item on the Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

Agenda Item 3. Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (C/23/2)

19. The Director-General noted that IRENA is gradually adapting to the changing health conditions, with the necessary prudence but also ambition to make up for the lost time during the COVID-19 pandemic. He stressed that the developments over the past couple of years continue to underscore the importance of the rapid shift to a more resilient and sustainable energy system with renewables at its core. Quoting the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

(IPCC) report, he underlined that any further delay in concerted global action will miss a brief and rapidly closing window to secure a liveable future. He pointed out that the energy space has become unpredictable on many different levels, and it is therefore even more imperative for IRENA to stay focused on the 2030 and 2050 milestones, while addressing short-term priorities that emerge along the way. The Director-General then referred to the recently released IRENA *Renewable Capacity Statistics* report that showed that more than 257 GW of renewables were added in 2021, a 9.1% year-on-year increase. He pointed out that this is in line with recent annual growth trends and is encouraging given protracted economic disruptions from the pandemic, showing an achievable pathway to net zero in 2050 supported by six existing technology avenues. However, he stressed that despite meaningful advancements, overall progress towards a net-zero future remains inadequate and the responsibility to make rapid gains rests with all. Acknowledging that it is difficult to navigate the changing energy space, he mentioned that the 2022 edition of the WETO focuses on necessary steps in the coming years to ensure the necessary progress by 2030, underlining the need to make the most of every chance to advance international cooperation and accelerate action.

20. The Director-General underscored that IRENA is actively pursuing all options to make progress by 2030 and thanked all IRENA Members who are involving the Agency in various initiatives and activities. He also mentioned his participation at the G7 meeting in Berlin later in the week, as well as the close cooperation with Indonesia as G20 Presidency, and the upcoming first Investment Forum in Indonesia as part of the G20 agenda. In addition, he mentioned IRENA's participation and contribution through knowledge and strategic advice in the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. The group is led by the United Nations Secretary General and supports developed and developing countries that are facing this three-dimensional crisis. He added that IRENA is actively preparing for the Clean Energy Ministerial in the United States of America (USA) later this year as well as COP 27 in Egypt and COP 28 in the UAE. IRENA is working with both Presidencies-designate to support their energy agendas. He thanked Members for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Agency, most notably in the Collaborative Frameworks, and acknowledging the level of time and focused engagement required by Members, but also the benefits of this commitment. He also invited Members to provide submissions with their feedback on how to maximise the value and effectiveness of these platforms.

21. Mr Dolf Gielen, Director of the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC), provided insights on IRENA's work on hydrogen – an area where the Agency has been ramping up its work significantly, with all parts of the organisation engaged in supporting the development of the hydrogen economy. He explained that there are many ongoing and upcoming work on hydrogen across the Agency, with engagement in various relevant international processes to ensure that the role of renewable green hydrogen is properly acknowledged.

22. Turning to IRENA's findings and insights thus far, Mr Gielen stressed the rapidly improving outlook for green hydrogen due to two factors. First, the technology and the economics of green hydrogen technologies, notably renewable power and electrolyzers, continue to improve rapidly. Second, the cost of fossil fuels has risen significantly and the thinking around supply security has changed, resulting in a stronger push towards green hydrogen. Mr Gielen stated that IRENA has focused work on trade and sees a significant role for international trade of hydrogen, as around a quarter to a third of hydrogen will be traded internationally by 2050, according to estimates. This share in the trade of total supply is comparable to the share of internationally traded natural gas today. He noted that pipelines and the refurbishment of natural gas pipelines, as well as ammonia are two key factors in the development of hydrogen trade.

23. He also stressed the need to address the initial investment needs and the governments' role in financing. Mr Gielen continued by highlighting the importance of ensuring that there are enabling frameworks in place that allow international trade, such as standards and certification. He highlighted that the Agency has completed nine analytical reports and there is a lot of ongoing work around relevant trade issues. He underlined that IRENA has been facilitating dialogues on the issue, in the context of the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen, a key platform for the Agency. Furthermore, he pointed out that IRENA is focusing both on technology and innovation, as well as on the policy component. He stressed that IRENA is supporting individual countries, with the Agency currently engaged in 17 initiatives and relevant processes through the provision of data and is working with an increasing number of partners to ensure complementarity and create synergies. He concluded by stressing that ensuring consistency of messages coming out of these processes is an important task going forward, involving the whole Agency.

24. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi, Director of IRENA's Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre (KPFC), reiterated that hydrogen, and green hydrogen in particular, is one of the key technical solutions that defines IRENA's energy roadmaps, which are then translated into socioeconomic impacts and the required policies to maximise the benefits of the energy transition. She underlined that the energy transition has a positive impact globally, estimating that 85 million additional jobs will be added by 2030, improving GDP and welfare, amongst other indicators. She also noted that these positive impacts are supported by a climate policy basket, covering a wide range of fiscal measures that control, for example, the regressive nature of carbon pricing.

25. She added that the 2022 edition of WETO shows an increased role for international cooperation to expand the fiscal space available to developing and fossil fuel dependent countries. Ms Ferroukhi explained that this would allow these countries to better address the energy and socioeconomic challenges, demonstrating the importance of policies in maximising the outcome of the transition. However, she pointed out that global results tend to hide disparities at the regional and national level. She explained that this year's *Renewable Energy Market Analysis* has focused on Africa, bringing together knowledge from the whole Agency and providing policy recommendations and tailored advice for Agency-led capacity building, including the forthcoming Regional Investment Forums and the Regional Energy Transition Outlooks (RETO). She continued that the report shows that the energy transition holds significant benefits for the continent and its regions in terms of economies, local industries, job creation as well as GDP and welfare, as measured by IRENA's Energy Transition Welfare Index. Ms Ferroukhi underlined that this can be achieved only if enabling measures around labor markets, skills and education, industrial policy for local value creation and diversification are introduced. She continued that these measures must be part of a much broader framework for a just and inclusive transition, calling for some systemic and structural changes.

26. Ms Ferroukhi emphasised that IRENA continues to refine its comprehensive policy framework that combines pertinent, enabling and integrating policies together with structural change and just transition policies. In this context, she also stressed the important role of international cooperation in the form of transfer funds from the global North to the global South, as part of the climate policy basket. This is particularly important given that international public financial flows to developing countries in support of clean energy have been decreasing over the past few years, as shown in this year's edition of the *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report* that IRENA prepared with partners.

27. She underlined that public finance remains key to creating an enabling environment that will attract private investments, as shown in IRENA's *Global Landscape of Renewable Energy Finance* report, considering the continued disparity of countries' abilities to attract investments. Ms Ferroukhi pointed out that about 84% of energy transition related investments in 2021 were focused on China, Europe, Japan, India and the USA, whereas IRENA's Africa Report shows that despite the continent's immense resource potential and high needs, Africa attracted only 2% of global renewable investment in the last decade. She added that these investments remain highly concentrated in four countries – namely, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, and South Africa, which together account for 75% of this 2% investment. She highlighted that based on those findings, IRENA's report recommends an African Green Deal to support African countries in their energy transition through international cooperation, south-south cooperation, comprehensive policy frameworks, and strong institutions. In closing, she stated that IRENA will prepare and present a full-fledged framework for an African Green Deal.

28. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Engagement and Partnerships (CEP), focused on the work to accelerate the energy transition and support enhanced climate action. He stated that IRENA has further expanded support to reach 84 countries with 170 work packages – a significant increase from the previously reported 72 countries. He relayed that support is being provided to an additional 12 countries through 26 additional work packages since the last Council, focusing on data and statistics, climate technology and infrastructure, power system flexibility, and renewables readiness assessment. Mr Gonul continued that IRENA's work has already been incorporated into the NDC enhancement processes in 27 countries, and the Agency's focus is now shifting to NDC implementation support, with work underway in more than 50 countries. He stressed that long-term strategies are a new stream of work recently initiated with Ecuador, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia, with IRENA's comprehensive work on assessments, planning, and roadmaps as the building block of that support.

29. Touching upon IRENA's Comprehensive Partnership Framework, he highlighted that the Agency's intensive work in the health and food-energy space over the past several years has started to bear fruit. IRENA is conducting country specific viability assessments for integrating renewable electrification solutions into agri-food and health service value chains and translating these assessments into specific investment project proposals that can benefit from IRENA's project facilitation framework. Mr Gonul explained that pilot implementation in the Hindu Kush Himalayas and West Africa is under finalisation and work will be expanded to additional regions and countries. He then highlighted another component of IRENA's energy for agri-food work to promote direct use of geothermal energy that IRENA has been advocating for together with practitioners from the Global Geothermal Alliance (GGA). He added that IRENA will soon release a guidebook, presenting priority actions for empowering agri-food value chains with geothermal heat, complemented by a series of capacity-building activities for policymakers.

30. Mr Gonul underlined the importance of creating enabling partnership structures and referred to IRENA's Beyond Food initiative recently launched with the UAE, with the establishment of a platform to promote clean cooking solutions. The initiative puts emphasis on electrification solutions for clean cooking, peer-to-peer learning, and entrepreneurship development, and supporting women's empowerment. Mr Gonul stressed that IRENA will continue putting cross-sectoral energy access work at the center of its flagship off-grid event, the International Off-grid Renewable Energy Conference (IOREC), that will take place in Nigeria later in the year.

31. He also relayed that IRENA Investment Forums will commence with the G20 Energy Transition Investment Forum, to be co-hosted by the Indonesian G20 Presidency and IRENA,

and held back-to-back with the G20 Energy Transition Ministerial in September 2022. The meeting will bring together ASEAN and G20 leaders to leverage the ability of decision makers to produce robust enabling environments for energy transition investments and work with developers, the private sector, and finance communities to prepare bankable project pipelines and facilitate access to sustainable finance. He stated that a West Africa Investment Forum will also be held in Nigeria later this year. In closing, he stressed that five years after the Florence Conference, the second High-level gathering of the Global Geothermal Alliance will take place in San Salvador with the support of the El Salvador Government, under the theme of advancing geothermal's role as a key component of a clean energy transition.

32. Mr Ahmed Badr, Director of Project Facilitation and Support (PFS), presented IRENA's work in supporting Members by facilitating the scale-up of investment. He first referred to the progress on the implementation of the IRENA/Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) Facility, which has led to the installation of five projects with a cumulative capacity of more than 75 megawatts, despite the challenges posed in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19, with more to come in 2023. He then stressed that these projects have benefited more than 2.8 million people in developing countries and that an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 additional people will receive clean energy in the years to come.

33. Turning to the new Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform, Mr Badr mentioned that the UAE, through the ADFD, has committed USD 400 million dollars as anchor investment, while IRENA is also in negotiations with five development financial institutions and multilateral development banks. He stated that all processes, eligibility criteria, scoring and the website for the new facility have already been put in place and that the plan is to announce and open various core projects by the end of the year. In terms of ongoing activities, he informed that the ETAF Platform has already been showcased at several workshops, including in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in Africa, with more to follow. Outlining the difference between ETAF and the Climate Investment Platform (CIP), Mr Badr explained that the ETAF will mobilise financing through funding partners, while the CIP facilitates financial matchmaking.

34. With regard to project applications, the CIP has received more than 330, out of which 75 were deemed eligible for technical assistance, 36 have already received assistance and 9 have already been matched with investors. He stressed that the current projects represent the potential of more than 200 megawatts and will reach more than 470 megawatts when these 36 projects are matched, with 95% of the projects coming from private sector project proponents. Elaborating on the matchmaking process, he underlined its vigorousness and scrutiny to ensure eligibility criteria are met before being introduced to project investors. He also announced that the Investment Forums will showcase these matched projects. Mr Badr underscored that IRENA has been supporting Members to build capacity to scale up investment and strengthen local economies by organising training with several development partners. He cited the example of the Training on Climate Financing for SIDS, organised in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of Japan and the Green Climate Fund, and added that more will be held with other development partners, including with the Government of Italy, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and the World Bank, to name a few.

35. In concluding, he highlighted the establishment of the new Collaborative Framework on Project Facilitation to support on-the-ground energy transition, that is co-facilitated by Austria and Egypt. He noted that 20 countries participated in the first meeting of the Framework and 6 provided input on how to structure the work. He also underlined the increasing number of project applications for green hydrogen projects and associated sectors, such as trade and transport.

36. Following the presentation on the Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, the Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), the USA, represented by Ms Helaina Matza, presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 17 May 2022, contained in document C/23/CRP/1.

37. The Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC), Maldives, represented by Mr Ahmed Ali, presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 18 May 2022, contained in document C/23/CRP/2.

38. Delegations welcomed the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 and congratulated the Director-General and the Secretariat for the leadership, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

39. Delegations expressed appreciation for IRENA's efforts to accelerate the just and inclusive energy transition, address climate change, and improve human welfare, and underlined the Agency's critical role in realising the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 7, and the Paris Agreement. One delegation encouraged IRENA to keep focusing on these aspects, including the job creation potential of the transition, with an emphasis on creating the right framework for a just transition. A delegation suggested reflecting on IRENA's areas of work in the context of a shifting energy landscape and evaluating programmatic activities to determine whether points of focus should remain, tighten or shift. Another delegation underlined the challenges some countries face with the realisation of climate and development goals due to internal instability and violence and called on the international community to devise holistic strategies to support them.

40. Referring to the global energy market instability mainly due to the crisis in Ukraine and the pandemic, delegations stressed the importance of achieving energy security by accelerating the energy transition, reducing fossil fuel dependency, diversifying energy systems and increasing energy market interconnections. In this context, a delegation called for the full operationalisation of the Global High-level Forum on Energy Transition, while another delegation suggested addressing the topic of energy security from a renewables perspective in a webinar, or as a section of upcoming reports. Furthermore, one delegation referred to its contribution to release a strategic petroleum reserve as well as to strengthen cooperation with countries experiencing difficulties in securing natural gas supply. Delegations expressed support for IRENA's greening the peacekeeping operations energy compact.

41. Delegations welcomed the 2022 edition of the WETO, lamenting the fact that although renewables are cost-competitive and climate-friendly, their uptake is not higher. A delegation stressed that the three main drivers of renewables deployment are political will, technical constraints for the integration of renewables into existing systems, and access to affordable finance. Another delegation expressed support for IRENA's contribution to the promotion of renewables in developing countries and increased connectivity at all levels, and expressed interest to share best practices in the renewables and energy efficiency sector.

42. Delegations expressed appreciation for IRENA's analytical outputs such as the Renewable Energy Roadmap for Central America, the hydrogen-related reports, including the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation: The Hydrogen Factor report, the Renewable Capacity Statistics 2022 report, regional outlooks, as well as reports on smart electrification, e-mobility and energy storage. One delegation suggested expanding the focus of the Renewable Energy Market Analysis to other regions as well.

43. Delegations elaborated on their national efforts to increase the share of renewables in their energy mix, strengthen distribution and transmission infrastructure, shape and implement national hydrogen policies, decarbonise the transport sector, ensure energy security and diversification and reinvigoration of the energy market, promote innovation, and provide financing to developing countries for renewable energy projects.

44. Delegations underlined their commitment to the realisation of sustainable development and carbon neutrality, and their cooperation with IRENA to achieve these goals. Examples of collaboration include the Educational Program for Youth Climate Leaders and the upcoming relevant knowledge toolkit, the Innovation Day and launch of the multi-stakeholder platform supporting the global transition of remote communities through renewable energy, the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue (BETD) and the support to the German G7 Presidency in 2022 as well as the preparations for the launch of the Global Offshore Wind Alliance (GOWA).

45. Delegations highlighted the importance of enhancing cooperation with all relevant actors to accelerate the energy transition and achieve carbon neutrality, especially under the current challenging times, and IRENA's critical role in facilitating this. Some delegations called for increased partnerships with other organisations actively working on the ground, in coordination with Members, and for IRENA to continue to identify gaps and avoid duplication of work with other organisations. Another delegation underscored the need for a focused and result-oriented approach and stronger North-South, South-South, and Triangular cooperation on technology transfer and financing for LDCs, SIDS and countries with economies in transition.

46. Delegations stressed the existential threat posed by climate change to lives, livelihoods, and the planet and referred to their national climate strategies and timelines for achieving carbon neutrality. Delegations welcomed IRENA's engagement in the COP 26 Breakthrough Agenda and regional initiatives by GRULAC and the Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership (ETP), as well as the Agency's contributions to various existing and future energy transition dialogues, initiatives, partnerships and reports.

47. Delegations welcomed a more detailed discussion on plans for IRENA's engagement at COP 27 and COP 28. One delegation shared his expectation that IRENA's analytical work, advice, and capacity-building on the run-up to COP 27 will lead to more ambitious NDCs.

48. Delegations expressed support for IRENA's financial matchmaking mechanisms. One delegation highlighted the CIP as an important platform promoting cooperation with the private sector, and called for enhancing collaboration with financial sectors. A delegation applauded the work of the ETAF Platform and expressed its willingness to support partnerships with multi-lateral development banks, while another expressed interest in learning more about ETAF and IRENA's relevant activities. One delegation expressed concern about the broad mandate of both CIP and ETAF and called on IRENA to provide well defined targets and a refined strategy in order to attract co-financing.

49. Delegations expressed concern for the low share of global green financing – only 2% – going to Africa for new renewables projects and called on IRENA to enhance project facilitation in support of African countries. One delegation highlighted the Eight Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) to be co-hosted by Tunisia and Japan in August 2022, while another welcomed the upcoming West African Energy Transition Investment Forum

to be held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2022, as important opportunities to address the extent to which scaling up global green financing for Africa can be realised.

50. Delegations also highlighted notable events on the horizon. A delegation mentioned the Clean Cooking Forum to be convened in Ghana on 11-12 October 2022, co-hosted by Ghana and the Clean Cooking Alliance. Another delegation referred to the upcoming second High-level meeting of the Global Geothermal Alliance, to be convened in El Salvador in September 2022.

51. The Council took note, with appreciation, of the Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 contained in C/23/2 and decided to submit it to the Assembly for consideration.

Agenda Item 4. Reports on Collaborative Frameworks

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

Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen

53. Mr Tudor Constantinescu, Principal Adviser to the Director General for Energy at the European Commission, Co-facilitator with Morocco, conveyed that the fifth virtual meeting of the Collaborative Framework took place on 20 May 2022, with over 50 participants from 30 Members and States in Accession. He reported that the meeting focused on the role of international trade within broader decarbonisation efforts and sought the best practices from Members, with interventions focusing on financing, infrastructure, regulations, and investment demand support. He acknowledged that IRENA has made significant contributions in the area this year, including through the *Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation: The Hydrogen Factor* as well as the *Innovation Outlook: Renewable Ammonia* reports, the latter of which presents one of the most promising pathways for global hydrogen trade. Additionally, two reports of a trilogy looking at the technoeconomic aspects of global trade have also been published, with the third expected to be released later this year, focusing on short-term actions that governments can take across the critical areas for trade identified during the last meeting.

54. He outlined the need to provide long-term finance certainty to investors to improve the business case and incentivise the flow of capital for hydrogen projects, and stated that financing support from multilateral development banks was acknowledged as essential, along with government support to enable proper initiation. He reported that governments need to develop infrastructure for trade, facilities at port, storage and inland transport, and that participants identified the importance of a hydrogen certification scheme to ensure standards in tracking CO₂ emissions along the value chain, as well as the need for a full lifecycle approach to guarantee the sustainability of the system. He noted that more discussion is needed for regulation, codes and standards for international transport of hydrogen. He conveyed the need to create demand from new applications to give investors a clear signal on the priorities and direction necessary to promote investment. Noting that the areas of action are clear, he underscored the need to accelerate the decision making and execution process to fast track policy support and regulation to accelerate hydrogen development. In this regard, he advised on the benefits of IRENA working with partners to create transparent platforms for the private sector to highlight what is needed from governments to accelerate the deployment of green hydrogen and implement the process of international trade.

55. Mr Constantinescu briefed the Council on IRENA's support to Indonesia during its Presidency of the G20 by organising a virtual event on hydrogen and storage on 15 June 2022. He also added that IRENA is supporting Germany, in its capacity as the G7 Presidency, with a series of reports and events relating to hydrogen, as well as on IRENA's support to the first MENA-Europe Future Energy Dialogue (MEFED) hosted by Jordan and Germany on 8-9 June 2022 in Amman, on opportunities for future green hydrogen trade. He noted that green hydrogen is a vehicle to ensure that renewables are a global commodity, and that IRENA's support is essential in assisting countries to realise this ambition. He expressed his gratitude to the Co-facilitator, the Director-General and IRENA staff for establishing this platform of cooperation that stimulates dialogue with the private sector.

Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition

56. Ms Mahek Mehta, Head of Clean Energy and Advanced Economies, Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy of the United Kingdom and Co-facilitator with Peru of the Collaborative Framework conveyed that further to Members' requests at the twelfth Assembly for the Agency to expand its work on critical materials, IRENA launched the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition on 21 March 2022. She informed that the Collaborative Framework aims to create a common forum to foster dialogue, coordinate activities on various topics, strengthen peer-to-peer exchange and collaboration, increase transparency, and develop a set of insights into the gaps and solutions for the energy transition that relies on critical materials.

57. In line with the feedback received from Members, she outlined that the Collaborative Framework will pursue activities under three main working groups: Observatory for Critical Materials and Minerals, focusing on data collection to aid the understanding of scarcity and potential supply shortages that may impact the energy transition within the decade; De-risking Critical Minerals and Supply, focusing on developing and applying strategies to de-risk supply, including innovative solutions to reduce demand growth for minerals and metals; and Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance, with a particular focus on mining.

58. She highlighted that IRENA has developed activities under the first Working Group to enhance Members' understanding of scarcity and potential shortages of critical materials and, in cooperation with Enel Foundation, has published a scoping paper focusing on materials for the energy transition. She informed that IRENA has also developed a technical report on the topic followed by two technical papers on lithium and on rare earth elements. She conveyed that the WETO also outlined, for the first time, the critical materials that may affect the energy transition and the potential solutions, with a commentary on the price spikes in critical minerals being published across various online journals.

59. She informed that IRENA has presented detailed descriptions of proposed activities of the Working Groups with Members, and that the Collaborative Framework anticipates feedback and expressions of interest to engage further. In an effort to share key insights from IRENA's and other organisations' analysis of critical minerals relevant to different renewable energy related technologies, Ms Mehta referred to a series of public webinars launched by IRENA under the Collaborative Framework in collaboration with Members and other public and private organisations to avoid overlaps in work. She mentioned that the first webinar focused on rare earth elements, where the European Commission Joint Research Centre and Natural Resources Canada shared recent and planned activities alongside the Enel Foundation, Global Wind Energy Council,

and the Rare Earth Industry Association. She highlighted that IRENA has also partnered with the World Bank to delve deeper into sustainable and critical materials supply in Africa.

60. Ms Mehta informed that the Collaborative Framework will hold a series of virtual meetings to discuss proposed priority areas under each Working Group, and that the second meeting of the Collaborative Framework is scheduled to take place on 10 June 2022, focusing on the second Working Group on de-risking the supply chain of critical materials and minerals. She announced that IRENA has received voluntary contributions from Norway to pursue activities under this Collaborative Framework. She expressed her gratitude to the Co-facilitator and acknowledged the support from the Director-General, IRENA Secretariat, and the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC) for launching this platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration towards enhanced understanding of the risks and opportunities of critical materials in the energy transition. She invited Members to actively engage in the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition, and to benefit from international dialogue and collaboration with relevant stakeholders, towards securing the supply of critical materials to sustain the energy transition.

Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation

61. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, and Co-Facilitator of the Collaborative Framework on Geopolitics of Energy Transformation together with Co-facilitator Germany, stated that much of the Collaborative Framework's focus this year has been on the geopolitics of hydrogen, which has proven timely given hydrogen's rapidly ascending prominence in global energy discourse. She noted that the hydrogen workstream culminated in January 2022, during the twelfth session of the IRENA Assembly, with the release of the *Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation: The Hydrogen Factor* report.

62. She stressed that the report has generated considerable attention from Members, media, and the wider public. In response to Member requests, IRENA has given several presentations on the report's findings. This included a dedicated presentation in Berlin at an in-person event co-hosted by Germany, Norway and the UAE, and several others including Chile, Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. She pointed out that external presentation requests continue to arrive regularly. She then added that content related to the report attracted over 50,000 visitors and the report itself was downloaded more than 12,000 times in the first quarter of 2022. Additionally, the report's press release was IRENA's most-read press release during that period, with 12,000 views.

63. H.E. Dr Nawal reported that at the Collaborative Framework's meeting on 26 April 2022, Members and invited experts had an opportunity to further exchange on the evolving geopolitical energy landscape, and on key policy considerations from the Hydrogen Factor report. She highlighted that the meeting was attended by more than 70 participants, including representatives of 36 Members as well as experts from academia and the private sector. She underlined that Members highlighted the growing importance of hydrogen as a key tool for strengthening energy security and stressed the need for establishing international standards to scale up the hydrogen economy and reduce costs.

64. She continued that the April meeting also offered an opportunity for Members to exchange views on ongoing and planned activities for the Collaborative Framework. H.E. Dr Nawal stated that in addition to considering suggestions for supply chains and jobs as possible topics for future

deep-dives, work is underway in 2022 on developing a geopolitical indicators framework and fostering dialogue around the climate-security nexus.

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

65. H.E. Mr Alvaro Ceriani, Permanent Representative to IRENA, Ambassador of Uruguay to the UAE and Co-facilitator with Canada of the Collaborative Framework on Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems reported on the plan to develop the Framework around six specific areas – the strengthening of the energy markets and regulations and to facilitate the penetration of renewables and secure, stable regulatory frameworks that contribute to long-term investment security; reinforced energy system planning through effective use of long-term energy scenarios; optimised operation of energy systems with high penetration of variable renewable energy in the energy system; cross-sectoral strategies to align renewable energy development in support of other Sustainable Development Goals such as those related to water, food, and health; cross-border interconnections to promote cross-border trade of renewable electricity; and energy system innovation through the introduction of technology and business solutions for cost effective integration of renewable energy.

66. He announced that the third technical meeting of the Collaborative Framework, scheduled to take place on 2 June 2022, will focus on the workstream on energy system planning. He pointed out that the aim of this workstream is to consolidate and share the findings of the Long-Term Energy Scenarios (LTES) Network, supported by IRENA, and will draw lessons and best practices from the experiences of France and China. He advised that an interactive session will facilitate direct feedback from a wide range of participating stakeholders on priority topics to be addressed in the future. He noted that Members as well as public and private practitioners have actively participated in the meetings to date, and that the representatives display a keen interest to actively engage across the different workstreams of the Collaborative Framework. He commended the Agency for the inclusive nature of the discussions and offered to contribute to its successful implementation through information sharing, knowledge dissemination, and capacity building activities, stating that both Co-facilitators continue to provide support and anticipate further progress of the work.

Collaborative Framework on Hydropower

67. H.E. Mr Jean-Christophe Füeg, Ambassador and Head of International Affairs of the Federal Office of Energy of Switzerland and Co-facilitator with Costa Rica of the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower reported that the Collaborative Framework has hosted 5 meetings since its inception, including a consultative meeting on the San José Declaration on Sustainable Hydropower and a High-level meeting on key hydropower challenges. He informed that the last meeting of the Framework was held during the World Hydropower Congress in 2021, hosted by the International Hydropower Association and the Government of Costa Rica. He outlined that the aim of the discussion is to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experiences, towards identifying opportunities and actions to allow hydropower to fulfil its role as an enabler of the clean energy transition. He mentioned that IRENA and the government of Canada co-organised a session on innovative hydropower solutions for reliable and flexible grids during the Innovation Day Canada event in March 2022, which gathered local and international actors to share their experiences and best practices, and to explore innovative hydropower solutions to maximise its contribution towards grid flexibility. He announced that the next meeting of the Collaborative Framework will take place on 1 June 2022, during which IRENA will present its latest findings on hydropower, discuss a draft special report on the topic, and collate Members' feedback to shape

the Collaborative Framework's future workstreams. In this regard, he invited interested Members to review the draft report that was circulated on 20 May 2022 and to provide feedback to the Agency during the upcoming meeting or in writing.

68. H.E. Mr Füeg announced that the Collaborative Framework is co-organising an international hydropower conference with the Government of Switzerland, scheduled to take place in Geneva on 13-15 October 2022, during which a field trip to hydro, pumped storage and floating solar plants will follow two days of meetings focusing on hydropower investment in developing countries, notably in Africa and South Asia, which face great challenges in mobilising investment. He advised that the conference, to be held in a hybrid format to allow virtual participation, will also benefit from the involvement of private investors from OECD and developing countries as well as multinational development banks. He thanked members of the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower for their active contributions to date, and expressed his gratitude to IRENA for coordinating the work and planning its activities.

Collaborative Framework on Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions

69. Mr Thebe Mamakoko, Representative of South Africa and Co-facilitator with the USA of the Collaborative Framework on Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions emphasised the need for strong action to ensure that energy transitions are just and inclusive. Highlighting the importance of sharing innovative solutions and best practices to address challenges and boost international collaboration, he stated that the Collaborative Framework will continue to provide a platform for such discussions. He outlined plans to convene a peer-to-peer exchange at the end of June 2022, as well as stakeholder exchanges with the IRENA Coalition for Action to inform the work of the Collaborative Framework and to identify best practices and lessons learned. He further proposed that the Public-Private Dialogue at the next IRENA Assembly could focus on just transitions. He added that through the peer-to-peer discussions, stakeholder engagement and public-private dialogue, the Collaborative Framework hopes to learn more about the activities that other organisations are pursuing towards a just transition, with the aim of streamlining international discussions and avoiding overlaps in work. He invited feedback and suggestions from Members and expressed the commitment of the Co-facilitators to work with IRENA's global Membership and the wider energy community on building consensus regarding the way forward, and on spurring action for sustainable, inclusive energy systems that support the needs of all people.

Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables

70. H.E. Mr H. Akau'ola, Permanent Representative to IRENA, Ambassador of Tonga to the UAE and Co-facilitator with Italy of the Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables reported a continued increase in the impact of the Collaborative Framework over the past year, with the G20 2021 including IRENA's report on offshore renewables, containing input from the Collaborative Framework, in the Energy and Climate Ministerial Communique for a Global Action Agenda. He mentioned the value of the Collaborative Framework being acknowledged by other initiatives, such as the industry association, Marine Renewables Canada, highlighting the engagement of Natural Resources Canada in the work of the Collaborative Framework and advocating for its continuation. He pointed out that the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative (LHI) also prepared a knowledge webinar series on offshore renewable technologies for islands, using input from the Collaborative Framework discussions. He reflected that IRENA partnered with the government of Denmark and the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) in 2021 to establish the Global Offshore Wind Alliance (GOWA), which complements the Collaborative Framework from an industry-focused perspective. He reported that GOWA's vision

of a world in which offshore wind makes a significant contribution to the energy transition is fully aligned with the Collaborative Framework, with the objective to achieve a total global offshore wind capacity of 380 GW by 2030 and an average of 35 GW of annual new capacity throughout the decade.

71. H.E. Mr H. Akau'ola informed that the Collaborative Framework will hold its fourth meeting on 24 June 2022, focusing on identifying synergies with the GOWA initiative on common goals; and, at the request of Members, on discussing the emerging enabling frameworks that support the development of offshore renewables worldwide, which will include interventions from key industry players on the main aspects to be addressed within those enabling frameworks. He announced that IRENA plans to host a side-event at the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon in July 2022, making a contribution of presenting the latest insights from the discussions under the Collaborative Framework. He expressed his gratitude to the Co-facilitator and acknowledged the support provided by the Director-General and IRENA staff to the work of this Collaborative Framework, which has proven to be a necessary platform for knowledge sharing, with a visible impact on new initiatives and important multilateral agendas. He thanked Members that have actively engaged in the work and discussions and invited those not yet involved to participate and benefit from the platform to advance the blue economy, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development agendas.

Collaborative Framework on Project Facilitation to Support on-the-ground Energy Transition

72. Dr Mohammed El Khayat, Executive Chairman of the New and Renewable Energy Authority in Egypt, and Co-facilitator with Austria of the Collaborative Framework on Project Facilitation to support on-the-ground Energy Transition reported that the first meeting was held in a virtual format on 19 May 2022 and was attended by 20 Members and States in Accession comprising of 26 participants, wherein priority issues, objectives, and collaboration modalities were identified. He stated that the meeting proposed the way forward for the Agency's work on project facilitation and support. He conveyed that Egypt and Austria accepted the proposal of Members to designate them as Co-facilitators for the next two years and to coordinate the deliberations of the Collaborative Framework. He further noted that Members highlighted the need for technical assistance to be provided to countries and on the ground. He commended the variety of activities currently undertaken by IRENA's Project Facilitation and Support Division, and stressed the importance of building local capacity to ensure the sustainability of renewable energy projects. He added that Members noted that the impact of COVID-19 and the Ukraine crisis have reinforced the need to diversify and decentralise renewable energy solutions to advance the world's energy transition. He reported that Members would aim to involve the private sector in implementing renewable energy projects in developing countries.

73. Delegations underscored the added value of Collaborative Frameworks in facilitating the exchange of best practices and lessons learned and staying abreast of developments on relevant topics. One delegation called for exploring ways to streamline the work of the Collaborative Frameworks in future Work Programmes and the Medium-term Strategy. Some delegations recommended that the Agency streamline the work undertaken under the existing Collaborative Frameworks to include additional topics as appropriate, and that additional Collaborative Frameworks be established once some of the existing ones conclude their work.

74. Concerning modalities of work, some delegations called for the Collaborative Frameworks to have a predictable format and schedule, strong leadership, and dedicated resources to reach tangible, clear and focused outcomes. To increase efficiency, one delegation called for the timely

submission of materials ahead of meetings to allow ample time for preparation, the allocation of sufficient time for meetings, and fostering the submission of Members' contributions. The delegation suggested setting up regional working groups discussing specific topics and similar areas of interest and presenting their recommendations at meetings of the Collaborative Frameworks, to increase Member interaction and a balance of inputs among regions.

75. Delegations highlighted the interest generated by the Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation and the urgency and importance to enhance understanding around the geopolitical dimension of the energy transition. Delegations also called for the work to include discussions on energy security as well as outlooks on supply and demand, in light of the current energy crisis.

76. Delegations welcomed the establishment of the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials for the Energy Transition, while one delegation underlined the importance of avoiding duplication of efforts with other organisations that are focusing on this topic. Another delegation encouraged IRENA to support discussions on governance issues, fair trade and respect of human rights and environmental laws, and offered to share insights on the disposal of solar power equipment, deep-sea mining and geothermal reservoirs.

77. Regarding the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen, one delegation recommended defining the workstreams to enable in-depth discussion on priority areas. Another delegation underlined the need to address the issue of energy surplus supply from a structural perspective in the context of the Collaborative Framework on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems. One delegation expressed appreciation for the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower and its potential to assist countries in securing financing for hydropower projects.

78. One delegation welcomed the work of the Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables, while another referred to the second United Nations Ocean Conference to be held in Lisbon, Portugal from 27 June to 1 July 2022, co-hosted by Kenya and Portugal, to scale up ambitions and efforts towards the sustainable use and conservation of oceans.

79. One delegation noted the establishment of the Collaborative Framework on Project Facilitation, and another referred to its engagement in the Collaborative Framework on Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions. One delegation also expressed support for the upcoming Collaborative Framework on Oil and Gas and indicated its interest to learn more about the objectives of the Collaborative Framework and ways to contribute to its success.

80. The Director-General acknowledged Members' appreciation of the Collaborative Frameworks and reiterated that they were designed to serve Members, who are the owners of the process, by ensuring a strong presence of all the components of the energy transition. He welcomed the suggestion to establish working groups at a regional level, and invited Members to address the unique challenges and potential actions for governments, private sector actors and key stakeholders, and how IRENA may best serve this process. Noting that many of the Collaborative Frameworks were established at the request of Members, the Director-General invited Members to consider modalities that also focus on the regional aspect to ensure that they are result-oriented.

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

Exchange of National Experiences

82. Delegations provided a summary of their national ambitions and targets and their active involvement in IRENA's activities, while some delegations announced their planned events for the coming months. A delegation expressed its willingness to host the South African programme for fundraising and linking projects with partners.

83. One delegation highlighted that 75% of their national energy is renewable and encouraged that efforts continue to reinforce the relationship between IRENA and the International Maritime Organization on the decarbonisation of the maritime transport sector. Another highlighted that Latin America can provide much experience and expertise in renewable energies owing to the south-south cooperation tool in place to promote and develop policy frameworks. Another delegation mentioned their national strategy to secure a total capacity of 15,000 megawatts in 2035, which would increase renewable energy from 2% of the energy mix at present to 27%, and 19% of total production by 2030. One delegation noted that the lack of affordable and accessible energy remains a hurdle to the realisation of policies to end poverty and the implementation of social projects and sustainable development, particularly in Africa, where two-thirds of the countries are classified as developing and LDCs. The delegation called on IRENA to intensify efforts to assist developing countries in this regard.

84. One delegation announced the development of a scheme aimed at ensuring energy and water security for farmers, with the installation of 2 million standalone solar agriculture pumps to replace diesel pumps, solarisation of grid connected pumps, and setting up of solar power plants of total 10,000 megawatt capacity, which will result in savings of about 32 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions per annum, and will generate employment opportunities equivalent to 75,000 jobs per year for skilled and unskilled workers.

85. One delegation outlined the social angle of the energy transition and the concerns of its government regarding several violations to human rights committed by private companies, noting that what is required to address these would be to build a new regulatory framework that benefits the general population. This delegation welcomed collaboration and advice from more experienced Members as well as those who may be facing similar challenges, towards reorienting the existing system and improving lives and livelihoods. One delegation informed of the target to realise 60% renewable energy in its energy mix by 2030 and anticipates IRENA's technical advice on leveraging biomass to replace coal, legal and technical assistance in the drafting of new power purchase agreements, and capacity building for the public utility sector. One delegation announced its national focus on clean cooking for the future, productive use of energy, solar power generation, as well as mini and micro hydro systems, with over 95% of their electricity coming from hydropower. This delegation also referred to the size of the country's biomass resources and scope for improvements in technologies, and called upon local development partners to support the development of biofuels and blending as well as to collaborate in the development of upcoming hydropower plants.

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

Agenda Item 5. Presentation of the Director-General pursuant to paragraph III (i) of the Addendum to document A/5/5

87. The Chair introduced the item and recalled that at the twelfth session of the Assembly in January 2022, the President notified the Assembly that the close of the twelfth session of the Assembly marks three years since the appointment of the Agency's Director-General Francesco La Camera indicated that in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, should the incumbent Director-General decide to seek renewal of this appointment for a further term, he should make this known after the twelfth session of the Assembly. The Chair informed that, in accordance with paragraph III (h) of the Annex to document A/5/5, the Director-General sent a letter on 23 February 2022 to Japan, in its capacity as Chair of the twenty-second meeting of the Council, expressing his intent to seek renewal of his appointment as Director-General of IRENA for a further term. The letter included a submission summarising the achievements to date and a vision for the future.

88. The Chair noted that in line with previous renewal processes, on 24 February 2022, Japan transmitted the above-mentioned letter to Members and invited them to express their views on the matter by 25 March 2022.

89. In its capacity as Chair of the twenty-second meeting of the Council, Japan represented by Mr Masashi Hoshino, Director, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, was invited to report to the Council on the consultation process relating to the letter of the Director-General. He reported that Japan compiled and provided Members with a summary of the feedback and views received on the matter. Mr Hoshino also reported that in keeping with previous renewal processes, Japan met with the Director-General and provided him with a summary of Members' views so that these views may be taken into account during his presentation to the twenty-third Council meeting.

90. Mr Hoshino thanked Members for their collaborative and constructive participation and informed the Council that over 60 submissions from IRENA Members, including all 21 Members of the Council, were received on the renewal for a further term of the incumbent Director-General. He also highlighted that Members in their submission expressed full support for the renewal of Director-General Francesco La Camera to serve for a further term and commended his leadership in adapting IRENA's work methods and achieving the desired outcomes by accelerating and advocating deployment of renewable energy despite the challenges presented by the COVID pandemic. He also highlighted that Members further recognised the Director-General's achievements to date and noted with appreciation that the vision for the future outlined in his submission is ambitious and appropriate to support Members and stakeholders in the realisation of the global energy transition.

91. He reiterated that a summary of the feedback was transmitted to IRENA Members on 13 May 2022 which included Members' views on specific aspects relating to the work of the Agency, such as the ongoing commitment to advance gender balance in its structure, its continued support to SIDS in accessing finance for sustainable energy projects, building capacity and reducing energy poverty, as well as, the Agency's contribution and the consultation of cooperation, exchanges and peer-to-peer interactions amongst Members through the establishment of the Collaborative Frameworks.

92. Mr Hoshino further underlined that Members expressed appreciation for the transparent process in which the renewal process of the incumbent Director-General was conducted to date and underscored further deliberations in this regard should continue in the same spirit of

inclusiveness and openness. In concluding, Mr Hoshino also conveyed his thanks to Uruguay as Chair of the twenty-third meeting of the Council for their support in preparation for the council deliberation on this matter.

93. The Chair thanked Japan, represented by Mr Hoshino for his report.

94. The Chair proceeded to make a proposal on the conduct of the Council's deliberation on this item and proposed that in line with paragraph III (i) of the Addendum to the document A/5/5, the Council hears a presentation of the Director-General, after which Council members, Council alternates and other IRENA Members will have an opportunity to make their interventions. The Chair also proposed that following the interventions on this matter, the Director-General will be invited to provide overall reflections on questions and issues raised.

95. The Council agreed with the Chair's proposal on the deliberations of this matter.

96. In line with paragraph III (i) of the Addendum to the document A/5/5, the Chair invited the Director-General to deliver his presentation.

97. The Director-General thanked Members for the opportunity to address them as he seeks to stay at the helm of IRENA for another term. He relayed that he has submitted a detailed letter on the achievements to date, along with a vision for the coming four years, and referred to the substantial discussions on the work of the Agency during the programmatic and strategy discussions. He then shared a few personal reflections on the past three years, the period ahead, and the feedback provided by Members.

98. He first reflected on his address to Members in the fall of 2018, when he presented his vision for the Agency to take it to the next stage of its short, but consequential existence. He explained that under the banner of a Leading Authority for Renewable Energy, he envisaged an action-orientated Agency that is agile, collaborative, self-reflective, and accountable in the quest for an inclusive and climate-safe world, and did not anticipate that these traits would be put to test so early in his tenure. The Director-General underscored that just one year into his term, 2020 took an unexpected and catastrophic turn due to the global pandemic, and multiple crises began to emerge. The concerns and uncertainties that continue to unfold demonstrate the impact the energy system has on economies, societies and citizens. He stressed that without a doubt, the energy transition, with renewable energy at its center, is an urgent priority and this is where IRENA has an unparalleled advantage in the global energy landscape. He highlighted the growing Membership during the past three years that has reached 166 countries and the European Union, noting that almost 90% of the global population live in these countries, accounting for around 7 billion people. He then referred to some major shifts made in IRENA since he took office such as the increased engagement with Members in all facets of work, recognising that the Membership is a major asset of the Agency. He also emphasised that IRENA's analytical and empirical work has improved in quality and impact, as the Agency gained a better sense of what was needed and has greater insights on the realities on the ground. Showing statistics of IRENA's increased presence in social media, the Director-General demonstrated that the Agency's voice is now stronger and more wide-reaching, and that it is on the right track.

99. Next, he highlighted the important shift toward partnerships and collaborations across all programmatic activities, resulting in the development of knowledge products with reputable entities to deepen analyses, amplify impact and avoid duplication of efforts. Examples include reports with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization

(FAO) and the African Development Bank (ADB), and the upcoming State of the Sectoral Transition report, prepared in cooperation with the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Climate Champions as part of the Breakthrough Agenda set out in Glasgow. Furthermore, the Director-General underlined his goal to perfect IRENA's analytical output, and to make these analyses alive, as a practical tool to bring impact on the ground. To achieve this, IRENA forged partnerships with entities with country presence, including the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations, multilateral and financing institutions, regional organisations etc. active in the energy space. Moreover, IRENA opened the door to the private sector, steered by a set of guidelines that preserve the integrity and independence of the Agency. He then added that he consolidated several streams of work on project facilitation that were scattered across different parts of the Agency and, with Member approval, created a new Division dedicated to this work. He pointed out that despite health restrictions, IRENA has advanced work on the CIP and launched the ETAF Platform with the UAE's support, and that as soon as conditions allow, IRENA will hit the ground running. Looking back, the Director-General stressed that the series of unexpected developments and obstacles have taught IRENA to expect the unexpected and have the confidence that it can face and overcome, with Member support, whatever lies ahead. He underlined that IRENA is in a crucial period and a turning point, and as the work on the Medium-term Strategy advances, the Agency's mission is of increased importance and Members' call to be assertive, bold, and innovative in implementing the mandate is clear.

100. The Director-General also underlined the need to be aware of the changes around us. For example, a welcomed development is the increase in the number of organisations involved in renewables, which means that IRENA must carefully choose where it is best placed to lead, and where to support the efforts of others. He highlighted that IRENA is aware of its key comparative advantages, most notably the global reach and clarity of mandate that enables the Agency to provide clear direction for a renewables-based energy transition for delivery of the the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while staying on a 1.5°C path. Recognising that IRENA's credibility and authority come from the knowledge products, he underscored that the Agency will continue to improve and excel the analytical and empirical work. He noted that IRENA has long promoted a systemic approach to the energy transition, across different uses, which remain at the core of the work. He added that the approach that simultaneously considers technology, policy, finance and socioeconomics has proven to be the right one, and the Agency will also go into more granular levels, most notably in regions, to ensure the work has real-life application and relevance. Going forward, the Director-General stressed the need to anticipate the direction of change and understand the wide-reaching impacts of the energy transition. For instance, as hydrogen started to emerge as a policy priority, IRENA has been at the forefront of work in this sector, across technology, policy, and geopolitics. In this context, he noted that IRENA will continue to shape the hydrogen agenda, including on standards and certification, as requested by Members. He added that the Agency is also at the forefront of the global agenda on critical materials and will continue to stay abreast of critical topics. IRENA is also aware that the structural nature of the transition has become very visible during the pandemic, for instance in areas such as health, water and food systems, and that education and training are becoming essential for both the just transition efforts and to ensure a skilled workforce that can realise the transition. In this context, he acknowledged that IRENA must stay abreast of these evolving shifts to provide authoritative and timely data and analyses.

101. The Director-General underlined the need to stay engaged with the constituencies across geographies and communities, and as the Agency's engagement with youth continues to grow, it will seek additional avenues to offer a meaningful platform for their input and contribution. He

added that with the shift toward more nuanced and granular regional work, IRENA will seek to engage more closely with regional and local institutions, including academic entities that can be a critical avenue not only in enriching the Agency's work, but also for the lasting impact of capacity-building efforts. He then underlined that as the energy transition advances, it is critical to stand by the commitment to leave no one behind and not allow a dual track, where those with means forge ahead but those without grapple with outdated fuels and strategies. In this context, he stated that IRENA will soon release the *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report (2022)*, which shows that LDCs are not progressing but falling even further behind. Highlighting that this has been a priority area in the work of the Agency, he informed that IRENA supported 64 LDCs and SIDS, accounting for over 1 billion people, in areas such as data and statistics, RRAs, resource assessment, MRV, long-term planning, PPAs, grid integration, and project facilitation, and will continue to strengthen support to ensure that they reap the benefits that renewables offer. He also emphasised that the energy transition must rapidly accelerate in size and scale. Considering that 80% of the investment will have to come from the private sector, IRENA will continue to engage with these important stakeholders and grow new opportunities for cooperation and impact.

102. Turning to institutional issues of high priority, he stressed that as a knowledge institution, IRENA's success depends on the quality of the staff and as an international organisation, mirroring the Membership is key to the Agency's credibility. To achieve this, the Director-General stressed that the senior team is gender balanced and geographically diverse, and that he will remain personally engaged to ensure exceptional staff is recruited and diversity is maintained at all levels, which will be even more important in the coming period. He acknowledged that as renewables have taken global center stage, IRENA will face tougher competition with other entities who want to attract the best talent in this sector, with indications of this competition already apparent. In response to this, he stressed that IRENA will continue to seek avenues to attract, develop and retain the best talent, so that the Agency is considered an employer of choice, and a place where excellence, creativity and passion are encouraged and rewarded. Reflecting on the Agency's resource base, a key enabler for delivery of the mandate, the Director-General stated that while the core budget remained unchanged, a steady increase in voluntary contribution funds biennium to biennium has been witnessed, and that the 2022-23 period is on track to continue this trend. However, he underlined the need to rethink what will constitute a stable resource base, a discussion he will continue to have with the Membership in this regard, in line with the provisions of the IRENA Statute.

103. In concluding, he highlighted that IRENA belongs to nations from all over the globe, ranging from the most developed, through the transitional and emerging economies, to small islands fighting for survival. It is the diversity of this input and participation of all that sharpens the Agency's programmatic output, brings uniqueness and excellence to knowledge products, and boosts IRENA's convening power. Therefore, to support the global community on the path to an inclusive, resilient, and fairer future, he underscored the need to galvanise progress, reaffirm the belief in international cooperation and empower the Agency. He reiterated that this is a time of risk, but also of great opportunity and immense possibility; that IRENA can make a major contribution in the quest for a better future for all, and that he would be honoured and privileged to continue to lead the Agency at this critical juncture.

104. Delegations expressed their appreciation of Director-General's leadership of the Agency over the last three years despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. They rendered their support for him to serve a second term as Director-General, and acknowledged his ambitions for the future, in support of Members on the realisation of the global energy transition.

105. The Chair thanked Council members and IRENA Members for their constructive feedback and noted based on the interventions made that the Members agreed that the achievements and the constant progress made by the Agency under the leadership of Director-General were remarkable. The Chair further noted that the interventions focused on the work of the Agency and Members have highlighted specific feedback and suggestions with regards to future activities to be carried out under Director General's vision.

106. The Chair in summarising the deliberations highlighted that in their interventions, Council members, Council Alternates and IRENA Members expressed their full support for the renewal of the incumbent Director-General for a second term. The Chair also reiterated based on the report by Japan, that over 60 submissions received from IRENA Members, including all 21 Members of the Council, expressed full support of the renewal of the Director-General to serve for a further term.

107. The Council therefore took note of the presentation made by the Director-General and the interventions made. The Council unanimously decided to recommend to the Assembly the renewal of the appointment of the incumbent Director-General for a further term.

108. In line with previous renewal processes, the Chair noted that he would inform the President-designate of the thirteenth Assembly that following the presentation made by the incumbent Director-General, the Council expressed support and recommended to the Assembly the renewal of his appointment for a further term.

109. The Chair informed the Council that he will prepare a draft decision on this matter, with the support of the Secretariat for consideration by the Assembly at its thirteenth session.

Agenda Item 6. Note of the Director-General – Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 (C/23/3)

110. The Director-General, in his presentation of the Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 (MTS), stated that the report contains a proposal on the key features of the Draft Strategy and some elements that should be considered as discussions continue. He thanked all Members for their contribution to the development of the Strategy to date, as well as Denmark and Kenya for their work as co-facilitators of the MTS Working Team.

111. He pointed out that IRENA's current MTS for the period 2018-2022 has four pillars that have greatly impacted the Agency's programming and delivery, ensured consistency and focus on longer-term objectives, and were the constant that provided direction in realigning internal structures, and adjusting programmatic priorities.

112. The Director-General underlined that IRENA is now entering a new stage, and the global energy landscape has dramatically evolved since the adoption of the current Strategy. He added that the role of renewables in enabling sustainable development, supporting climate action, and promoting energy security is now a headline topic and renewables have permanently moved from niche to mainstream. Therefore, the Strategy for 2023-2027 will be implemented during a critical period. He stressed that by 2027, the world will have a clear picture on whether SDG 7, and by extension, the 2030 Agenda will be achieved; hence, actions in the near term have an elevated significance. He added that the strategic direction of the MTS 2023-2027 will determine the

Agency's contribution to the global effort to achieve sustainable development and drive climate action in the next five years, and its ability to provide consequential service to all of its Members.

113. The Director-General highlighted that in all discussions to date, Members have reiterated that the current strategic direction remains valid but requires finetuning to reflect the urgency of this time under the lens of programmatic implementation. He explained that specific feedback on the Draft Framework received in the meeting of the Working Team in May 2022 and the PSC, as well as inputs from the Council will be incorporated in the draft MTS, which will be considered by the Council at its next meeting.

114. In concluding, he stressed that IRENA's strategic objectives will be achieved only if a predictable and sustained resource base is in place. He stated that the establishment of the Renewables Acceleration Fund will work towards this goal, and that IRENA will work with Members to create a modern, responsive and accountable mechanism in the course of this year.

115. Ms Elizabeth Press, Director, Planning and Programme Support (PPS), reiterated that IRENA has received excellent input from discussions thus far. Elaborating on the Draft Framework, she explained that the current mission statement is around the pillar structure and IRENA's functions are framed in the context of the ongoing transformation of the global energy system. She continued that the new suggested mission statement adds a sense of urgency, recognising current contexts and priorities that have emerged in the last few years, including around a just, fair, and inclusive transition, as well as the broader impact of the energy transition on climate, economic, and social settings. Ms Press underlined that Members have made suggestions on how to refine the language, including how to reflect the systemic nature of the transition, the Paris Agreement and the 1.5°C goal in the mission statement.

116. Turning to the four-pillar structure, she stated that it has guided the Agency through successive programs. The IRENA Secretariat has put forward a proposal to expand it to a six-pillar structure that will provide the nuance that already exists, to some extent, in the Work Programme, by putting emphasis on the work around partnerships and country support. She explained that the Center for Excellence for the Energy Transition would remain the backbone of the analytical work, containing all flagship work and looking at the way the energy transition impacts the economy and society. Ms Press continued that the second pillar would stay as the Global Voice for Renewables, which is IRENA's core mandate and a requirement to stay on top of the latest developments on renewables-based technologies and impacts on the transition.

117. She explained that work on regions and countries will now form another pillar, reflecting Members' request to expand work at the regional level given IRENA's comparative advantage, and enhancing linkages between regional and country work. Ms Press relayed that there would be a specific pillar on International Cooperation and Network Hub, expanding existing peer-to-peer collaboration. Furthermore, she mentioned the addition of the Project Facilitation pillar, in response to Members' feedback on the importance of consolidating work around investment and project facilitation. She concluded by referring to the pillar on the institutional aspects of the Draft Framework of MTS 2023-2027 and stated that Members have expressed certain reservations on the need for its inclusion and instead suggested adding a narrative similar to the one in the current MTS that defines some of these issues as they relate to the implementation of programmatic activity.

118. H.E. Mr Kariuki Mugwe, Permanent Representative to IRENA, Ambassador of Kenya to the UAE and Co-facilitator of the MTS Working Team reported on the second and third meetings of

the MTS Working Team, which were held on 23 March and 11 May 2022, respectively. Echoing the words of the Director-General, he thanked all Members that participated in the meetings, and noted that he co-facilitated the meeting together with H.E. Mr Franz-Michael Mellbin, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador of Denmark to the UAE.

119. He stated that at the March meeting, Members had the opportunity to continue discussions on the Draft Framework for the MTS 2023-2027, focusing on identifying the next frontier for IRENA and closely examining and refining the Agency's functions at all levels to galvanise and accelerate efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement. He added that the Secretariat shared preliminary ideas on how to sharpen the structure and objectives of the MTS to reflect what had been discussed in the context of the Work Programme.

120. H.E. Mr Mugwe explained that the IRENA Secretariat consolidated the areas of consensus and shared a Draft Framework, together with sessional documents prior to the May meeting, by drawing on Members' discussions and insights as well as the written inputs provided. He added that this constituted a working document that presented an updated mission statement and a revised pillar structure. As such, the May meeting served to gather Members' thoughts and feedback on the proposed amendments.

121. He then shared some of the main messages that came out of this meeting, and reported that the Working Team welcomed the Draft Framework as a well-balanced document and a good basis for discussion, while reiterating that several elements of the current MTS remain valid. He noted that the Working Team also welcomed the focus on acceleration of renewables and underscored the important role all Members can play in accelerating the energy transition and climate action, especially the high-emitting ones. In addition, he highlighted that Members called for a holistic approach towards the renewables-based transition of energy systems and suggestions were made on further refining the language of the mission statement.

122. H.E. Mr Mugwe added continued that amendments to the pillar structure allowed the Working Team to fine tune pillar three on Support for Regions and Countries as well as pillar four on International Collaboration and Network Hub. Regarding the fifth pillar on facilitating renewables deployment, he stated that Members deemed its addition very pertinent, considering the challenge of securing sustainable and affordable financing, while reiterating that IRENA's role is not that of an implementing Agency. He relayed that views differed on the need for a specific pillar on Efficient and Agile Institution, with calls for further discussions on this in the Working Team. Lastly, Members recognised the centrality of expanding the Agency's resource base and devising a resource mobilisation strategy, especially as the Agency's programmatic activities become increasingly complex.

123. Regarding next steps, H.E. Mr Mugwe explained that the co-facilitators and the Secretariat will take into consideration the specific comments, suggestions and interventions made to date during the next stage of drafting.

124. Delegations thanked the Director-General and the Secretariat for preparing the Draft Framework for the MTS 2023-2027 and expressed their appreciation to Denmark and Kenya for their leadership of the MTS Working Team.

125. Delegations noted that the Draft Framework is a well-balanced document and forms a good basis for discussion, and welcomed retaining the spirit of the four existing strategic objectives as they remain valid. One delegation called for the timely submission of the next iteration of the Draft

Framework to allow for an inclusive and transparent process and the provision of feedback. Another delegation requested further clarifications on the prioritisation among pillars in terms of budget. One delegation invited suggestions on how to best leverage Council meetings to advance strategic goals and add substantive deliberations to the Council agenda.

126. Delegations emphasised the importance of a balanced MTS to shape the Agency's strategic direction and fortify its position at the center of the global conversation on energy transition, while ensuring that IRENA remains relevant to all Members. Some delegations highlighted that IRENA's work should remain within the framework of its Statute as well promote synergies and avoid duplication of efforts with other organisations. One delegation called for the new Strategy to enable IRENA to support Members in deploying renewables according to their needs and their respective situations.

127. Referring to the current crisis in Ukraine and increased energy prices, delegations stressed the urgency to switch to renewables and ensure that efforts to tackle climate change are not derailed. Some delegations reiterated their commitment to a decarbonised future and called on the new MTS to continue to contain elements in supporting SIDS. One delegation expressed hope that the MTS would also support the implementation of outcomes of COP 26 and another delegation stressed that solving the energy and climate crisis are not two mutually exclusive goals.

128. One delegation emphasised the importance of ensuring access to technology and innovation for a cost-effective energy transition. Another delegation stressed the importance of securing energy storage capacity to avoid energy shortages, as well as the future role of green hydrogen in transportation, and the promotion of small- and medium-sized renewables projects.

129. Delegations welcomed IRENA's analytical inputs and discussed areas of work in which IRENA should continue engaging, such as analysis at the country, regional and sub-regional levels. Other key areas highlighted include hydrogen, ammonia, renewables, the achievement of universal access to energy, clean cooking, system flexibility, securing human resources for the energy transition, and how to achieve a people-centric renewables deployment.

130. Some delegations welcomed the need to implement systemic changes holistically to help build more a predictable, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable global energy system. One delegation also noted that the MTS should recognise that both the increased share of both renewables and natural gas can help attain energy and climate goals, while another stressed IRENA's role in shaping the global hydrogen markets and promoting dialogue on international standards.

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

132. Regarding the Centre of Excellence for the Energy Transition pillar, one delegation stressed that IRENA is well placed to continue to be the leading global authority on renewable energy and the clean energy transition. Another delegation noted that the next MTS should broaden its scope of work through Members' guidance and scientific findings.

133. Delegations supported the strategic pillar on Global Voice of Renewables, and underlined the need to go beyond the call for renewables, considering the issue has entered the mainstream. They also emphasised the need to reach all audiences, stressing that renewables are a strategic investment in resilience, energy security and socio-economic prosperity.

134. Delegations welcomed the focus of the Support for Regions and Countries pillar, with one delegation suggesting the addition of African countries in the group of countries receiving attention, and that RETOs should consider regional commitments such as the African Union's Agenda 2063. Another delegation underlined that the issue of achieving energy security should fall under this pillar.

135. One delegation underlined that current global challenges accentuate the need for global cooperation to solve them. Delegations underlined the important role of the Collaborative Frameworks, especially the ones on Green Hydrogen and Critical Materials for the Energy Transition, and called on giving them a prominent place in the MTS. One delegation stated that Collaborative Frameworks should fall under the International Collaboration and Network Hub pillar. Some delegations underlined the need for IRENA to work closely with Members and relevant regional organisations operating in the energy sphere.

136. Delegations welcomed the addition of the Facilitator of Renewables Deployment pillar and one delegation suggested that the title and objectives could reflect mobilising capital or finance. One delegation welcomed the CIP and called for having the supported projects presented at a meeting or in a publication. Some delegations underlined the need to engage private sector developers and financial players, including financing institutions and funds. One delegation stressed the need to ensure capital flows to the countries and regions most in need, such as Africa.

137. One delegation supported the inclusion of a pillar on Efficient and Agile Institution, while several others expressed reservations and proposed weaving this element throughout the MTS instead. One delegation expressed support for expanding IRENA's resource base and welcomed clarifications on how IRENA's integrity will be maintained in the process as well as reconsidering the name of the Renewables Acceleration Fund, to avoid confusion with the ETAF Platform.

138. The Council considered and took note of the Draft Framework and the follow-up actions for the development of the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

Agenda Item 7. Administrative and Institutional matters

139. The Chair of the Council introduced the agenda item and invited the Chair of the AFC to present the report of the work of the AFC.

140. The Chair of the AFC, Maldives, represented by Mr Ahmed Ali, Director General, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology informed on the consideration of issues of the Committee at its meeting held on 18 May 2022 in a virtual format. He relayed that the report of the meeting was contained in C/23/CRP/2.

141. On the issue of Staff Tenure, the Chair of the AFC mentioned that the Secretariat made a presentation on the harmonisation proposal, which incorporated the flexibility to approve exceptional extensions of staff for up to three years beyond the authorised limits. The Secretariat also outlined the Human Resources (HR) initiatives that could enable IRENA to become an

employer of choice and outlined a summary of issues raised by the Open-ended Group on the Tenure Policy of Professional Staff and Above. He reported that AFC members highlighted the need to provide a summary of data and trends in support of tenure harmonisation to the Council. Responding to a request raised during the AFC meeting, Mr Ali mentioned that the list of organisations participating in the UN Inter-Agency Agreement was included in the AFC Chair's summary report. He reported that the AFC took note of the Secretariat's presentation and the proposal to continue work in the context of the Open-ended Group with a view to concluding the tenure policy discussions by the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council for timely submission to the Assembly.

142. On the Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021, the AFC Chair reported that following the presentation of the Secretariat, a participant encouraged Members to pay outstanding assessed contributions in a timely manner and another participant queried the comparative increase in expenditure under consultant and contractual services. He reported that the AFC took note of the Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021 and decided to submit it to the Council.

143. The AFC Chair recounted that the Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken received a comment on the cost increase for consultancy services and a request for additional details on the nature of concerns highlighted on consultancy management practices, as well as additional clarification on when the Human Resource Directives will be updated to reflect these changes. He conveyed that the Secretariat clarified that the report highlighted several matters, including the nature of work performed by consultants, simplifying the process for engaging the services of consultants and reviewing and adjusting consultancy fees and consultancy selection processes based on lessons learned from COVID-19, and that the report made recommendations to improve consultancy management processes that IRENA has in place. The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

144. On the 2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA, the AFC Chair reported that the Committee took note of this report and decided to submit it to the Council.

145. The Council took note of the report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee.

a. Staff Tenure Policy

146. The Director-General thanked Members for the flexibility in their consideration of the proposal on the tenure policy for 'Professional staff and above', for which further information will be provided to enable an agreement at the next Council meeting. He also thanked Members for the decision on the Staff Tenure Policy for 'General Service' staff which was adopted at the twelfth session of the Assembly. He advised that consideration of issues relevant to the administration and management of IRENA will shape IRENA's future for the coming years and determine its capacity to operate at high-level in support of a just and inclusive energy transition that is tailored to the specific circumstances of the global Membership.

147. Mr Andrey Timoshenko, Chief of Human Resources, Administration and Management Services Division, presented a detailed summary on the key aspects of the discussions held at the Open-ended Group and AFC meetings. He noted that the tenure harmonisation for Professional staff and above in IRENA involves two groups of staff: staff who were hired prior to January 2017

and were subsequently granted a four-year extension beyond the authorised tenure limits, and all other staff recruited post-January 2017, which has resulted in a disparity between the two different tenure regimes in IRENA. Notably, the pre-January 2017 staff benefited from a 13-year tenure whereas the post-January 2017 staff follow a nine-year tenure cycle in the Agency.

148. He stressed that the disparity has led to a sense of unfair treatment amongst staff which undermines the principle of equity, central to human resources principles in contemporary organisations. He noted that the unpredictability of employment is a challenge for the Agency in terms of planning its programme of work and staffing. He further summarised that all this has resulted in perceptions of unfairness and inequality and contributed to low staff morale. He conveyed that harmonising the tenure for all staff in the Agency (through the extension of post-January 2017 staff to a total length of service of 13 years) would produce moderate savings for the Agency because potential installation costs for new hires would exceed the longevity costs associated with staff extensions. He informed that detailed costing analysis will be provided in the context of the Open-ended Group discussions.

149. He further pointed out that the harmonisation of tenure for all in the 'Professional staff and Above' category will allow them to serve up to a maximum duration of 13 years subject to programmatic priorities as well as staff performance and availability of funds. He also outlined the criteria for exceptional extensions of agency professional staff for up to three years (beyond the 13-year limit). He added that these criteria are the result of a rigorous review process and subsequent adaptation of similar practices in other international organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, where specific circumstances gave rise to exceptional extensions beyond authorised tenure limits. He pointed out that the list of recommended criteria is not conclusive as some of them may be further refined during the Open-ended Group discussions and stressed that full consideration should be given to the programmatic priorities of the Agency, as well as the retention of key staff in Agency programmes and senior managerial roles to ensure the continuity of essential operations and effective delivery of the Agency's mandate.

150. He conveyed that as the Agency explores new developmental avenues and does its ground-breaking work, there is a growing demand for new competencies which may manifest in staffing gaps in a highly competitive market requiring adequate staffing solutions such as redeployment and retention of serving staff. He also advised that all these circumstances will be duly considered only if a competitive selection process failed to generate adequate pool of qualified candidates.

151. Summarising HR initiatives to position IRENA as an employer of choice, he mentioned that joining the UN Inter-Agency Mobility Agreement is pivotal to ensure continuity of the employment status and related service credits through established mobility mechanisms such as secondment, loan and transfer of staff within the UN common system and thus tap into the vast UN labour market. He also highlighted the importance of staff participation in the UN pension fund, including its benefits such as monthly pension, end-of-service lump sum, emergency loans and after-service health insurance. He noted that Agency experience in recruitment to date shows that candidates from the UN system oftentimes decline Agency employment offers due to the lack of opportunity to continue their contributory service with the UN Pension Fund. He further stated that the Agency is working on introducing certain aspects of talent management, including policies on performance management, talent acquisition, work-life balance and administration of consultants. He noted that the Agency is also planning to establish a meaningful learning and training programme to equip staff with critical soft skills in people management, leadership, and

communication. He further mentioned that all these initiatives will help the Agency retain critical staff that are leading scientific discussions in areas of high priority for IRENA.

152. He also shared a summary of the feedback received from the Open-ended Group and AFC members which involves a request for additional information to HR data on staff turnover, vacancy rates, and staffing levels; the proposal to grant the Director-General the flexibility to extend contracts for up to three years on an exceptional basis; the principled support for the proposed criteria for exceptional tenure extensions (for up to three years) with a need to consider merit-based principles, and a further request for a note on the process of joining the Inter-Agency Agreement along with its implications as well as cost-and-benefits for IRENA. He also mentioned a suggestion to factor succession planning in Agency staff retention strategy and to give due consideration to the unique nature of IRENA in the system of international organisations, especially when reviewing organisational benchmarks in terms of conditions of service.

153. In concluding, he informed the Council of the next steps in the lead-up to the next Council meeting in October 2022, specifically:

- further work in the context of the Open-ended Group -- the Secretariat to draft a Note to include the analysis of Agency 'Professional staff and above' hired before and after January 2017 including a section on the criteria for exceptional extension of staff contracts by the Director-General (beyond the authorised tenure limit);
- the Secretariat to prepare a separate Note with an in-depth analysis on joining the UN Inter-Agency Agreement and the UN Pension Fund;
- the Secretariat to circulate a paper on HR trends;
- the Chair of the Open-ended Group to present a summary reflection and feedback on the meetings of the Open-ended Group and AFC with a view to concluding the tenure discussion and submitting the Open-ended Group's final proposal to the next Council meeting.

154. Dr Gloria Magombo, Secretary for Energy and Power Development, Zimbabwe and Facilitator of the Open-ended Group, reported on the outcome of the second meeting held on 12 May 2022 in a virtual format, with 17 participants representing 15 Members in attendance. In her presentation, she concurred with the Open-ended Group's views presented by the Chief of Human Resources and affirmed the requests of Members as follows:

- to obtain data on the application rate of IRENA vacancies and the reasons for early departure, further information to be provided regarding the criteria and circumstances on granting the Director-General the flexibility to extend contracts up to three years;
- a review by the Secretariat on IRENA HR trends and statistics and an adjustment of the HR strategy accordingly to position the Agency as one of the best employers in the sector and to ensure competitiveness in attracting the best candidates;
- to continue the discussions on matters concerning the inclusion of IRENA in the Inter-Agency Agreement and the inclusion of IRENA staff in the UN Pension Fund;
- the Group to review any additional human resources concerns at IRENA in line with the Agency's strategy and practice at other international organisations, to position the Agency as one of the best employers in the sector and to ensure IRENA's competitiveness in attracting the best talent;
- the Secretariat to provide further justifications and a Note containing additional information on Agency Professional staff hired before and after January 2017, and to

include a section on the criteria presented in the Open-ended Group relating to granting the Director-General the flexibility to extend Professional staff contracts for up to three years after tenure service; and

- the Secretariat to provide a separate Note with in-depth explanations on the inclusion in the Inter-Agency Agreement and the UN Pension Fund.

155. She emphasised that the Open-ended Group continues to work closely with the Secretariat to outline the next steps envisaged and to capture the issues raised for the submission of the final reflections to the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council. She thanked participants for their cooperation and agreement and invited comments from Members.

156. Delegations thanked IRENA and the facilitator of the Open-ended Group for their presentations. Some delegations supported the proposals on the three-year extension and anticipated further details and analysis on this policy decision. One delegation highlighted the importance of how the criteria are applied to ensure transparency in both the process and decision-making. Another delegation expressed strong support on performance, and one delegation requested that Members be informed on such important circumstances for extension. Delegations underscored the necessity to have clear tenure policies in place for Professional staff and above that will also attract the best talent and encourage professional and organisational development with staff moving between different organisations, one of whom raised the concern that the harmonisation proposal may lead to an extension of tenure by default. Two delegations emphasised the need for a process to ensure a smooth transfer of knowledge and responsibilities at the end of a staff member's tenure and further emphasised the importance of succession planning being introduced in the policies.

157. One delegation noted the evidence of IRENA's attractiveness to applicants as mentioned in the Progress Report of the Director-General, with 3,200 applications received for 23 positions since January. Two delegations welcomed the inclusion of IRENA in the Inter-Agency Agreement and supported the inclusion of IRENA in the UN Pension Fund in principle as it permits greater career continuity for IRENA staff and attracts qualified candidates. These delegations requested a robust analysis on the associated rationale, costs, and process associated to facilitate decision-making. A delegation anticipated the timely receipt of documentation prior to the Council meeting in October to enable the closure of the agenda item. One delegation supported the introduction of new performance management systems, recruitment, and work-life balance policies in principle once concrete proposals are received.

158. The Council took note of the presentations and agreed to continue discussions on this matter at its twenty-fourth meeting with a view to presenting its recommendation to the next Assembly.

159. The Council also agreed that the Open-ended Group continues its discussions on this matter and presents its recommendations to the twenty-fourth Council.

b. Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021 (C/23/4)

160. The Secretariat presented the Audited Financial statements of IRENA for 2021 and presented the status of the implementation of the external audit recommendations to the Council. Mr Moez Charfeddine, Head of Unit, Administration and Management Services, introduced the item and informed that the audited financial statements were prepared in compliance with the financial regulations and procedures of IRENA and in accordance with the International Public Sector

Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and were submitted together with the report of the Agency's external auditor. He added that the external auditor submitted an unqualified audit opinion confirming that the financial statement represents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency at the end of 2021. He reported that 95.8% (USD 63.4 million) of the total biennium budget 2020-2021 (USD 66.2 million) was utilised, and that Members paid 93.2% of their assessed contributions, and that up to USD 21.9 million was received in voluntary contributions to programmatic activities which represented 43% of total revenue. He stated that for 2021, the Agency had a surplus of USD 1.8 million with a USD 2.6 million in core cash surplus as reflected in note 18 of the financial statements. He conveyed that the auditors raised only one recommendation, for which a status of implementation will be reported at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council.

161. The Council considered and took note of the Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021, contained in C/23/4 and decided to submit them to the Assembly at its thirteenth session.

c. 2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA (C/23/5)

162. On behalf of the Provident Fund Management Board, Mr Moez Charfeddine presented the Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA as contained in C/23/5. He reported that the performance of the Fund was formally reviewed by the Board each quarter during 2021 with Zurich LLC, the administrator of the Fund, and the investment from mandatory contributions resulted in a net gain of around USD 267,000. He affirmed that the performance of the Fund was closely monitored by the Board in light of the extreme volatility associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and he noted that the conservative nature of the Fund served well during such volatile times, with no change to the portfolio mix being made. He further reported that the 2021 financial statements of the Staff Provident Fund were audited by the external auditor of the Agency, and he informed the Council that the external auditor submitted an unqualified audit opinion confirming that the financial statement represents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Staff Provident Fund. He mentioned that the Provident Fund consisted of 158 participants as of 31 December 2021 and the total net assets of the Fund was valued at USD 23.1 million.

163. The Council took note of the 2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA contained in C/23/5 and decided to submit it to the Assembly for its consideration.

d. Report of the Director-General – Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken (C/23/6)

164. The Director-General presented his Report on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken, covering the period from 26 September 2021 to 25 April 2022, and he noted that the Internal Audit Office (IAO) implemented the following activities:

- submitted a comprehensive Report to the External Auditor on recommendations and management action on audit activities for the year 2021, pursuant to financial regulation 11.4(c) and Section VIII of the Internal Audit Charter (Charter);
- prepared a Risk-Based Internal Audit Plan for the Work Programme and Budget 2022-2023 pursuant to Section VI (b) of the Charter;

- completed various activities to enhance the IAO core foundation, which include: (a) making internal updates to the Internal Audit Charter to clarify scope of work, authority, responsibility, and accountability whilst preserving the strength and functionality of the current charter; (b) developing a manual outlining IAO audit methodologies and processes for the entire audit lifecycle; (c) developing a comprehensive risk-based audit universe; and (d) defining the audit engagement rating methodology;
- updated the Charter, which includes changes to better align with the Institute of Internal Audit (IIA) standards, by making internal updates to the terminology and content of the Charter to clarify the scope of work, authority, responsibility, and accountability of IAO. The updated Charter will be presented at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council;
- provided an advisory insight memo on the observation of the year-end fixed assets physical count, i.e. furniture, office equipment, and information technology assets conducted by management at IRENA Headquarters and the Bonn Office; and
- finalised the audit on Consultancy Services detailed in Section II of the Report, in accordance with the Audit Plan for the Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021.

165. The Director-General advised that he also received the Annual Audit Report relevant to the audit activities performed in the year 2021, pursuant to Section VIII of the Internal Audit Charter.

166. 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 C/23/6, and decided to submit it to the Assembly.

e. Report of the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board

167. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, as Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board presented an oral report on the Board's activities. She confirmed that the Terms of Reference for the Ethics Advisory Board have not been tested and no issues or concerns were identified in this document or in the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA, and that as a result, the Council, at its twenty-first meeting, deferred the assessment of the Terms of Reference for the Ethics Advisory Board, the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest for IRENA, and activities of the Ethics Advisory Board for an additional four-year period until the twenty-ninth meeting of the Council in 2025. She recounted that Algeria, Germany and the UAE were appointed as members of the Ethics Advisory Board for a two-year term, from 2021 to 2023. H.E. Dr Al-Hosany announced that during the present reporting period, the Board was not called upon to assist in any ethics matters, nor did it need to hold any consultations with the Director-General or the Ethics Officer. She also confirmed that the Board will continue to work together with the Director-General and the Ethics Officer of IRENA whilst assuring that appropriate safeguards for the protection of individual confidentiality and due process rights are in place.

168. The Council took note of the oral Report of the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board.

Agenda Item 8. Arrangements for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council

169. The Chair announced the proposal to hold the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council on 27-28 October 2022 in Abu Dhabi, with the associated meetings of the subsidiary organs scheduled for 26 October 2022. The Chair noted that the dates and the format of the upcoming Council meeting may be subject to change depending on the evolution of global circumstances and measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

170. Delegations proposed to designate Uruguay and Norway as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council. The Chair acknowledged the proposal and expressed his appreciation to Council members for their continued trust.

171. The Council took note and agreed that the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council will take place on 27-28 October 2022, with related meetings on 26 October 2022.

172. The Council designated Uruguay as Chair, and Norway as Vice-Chair, of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council.

Agenda Item 9. Any other business

173. Members were invited to raise any other issues.

174. Egypt, represented by H.E. Mr Sherif El Bidewy, Permanent Representative to IRENA and Ambassador to the UAE, briefed the Council on the expectations envisioned as Host of COP 27, to be held in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh. He noted that the expectations of African and developing countries on the outcome of the Conference are expected to be of priority. He referred to the pledges on the reduction of emissions and other areas of climate action at COP 26 and underlined the need to emphasise implementation in the coming phase of global climate action. To ensure a balanced approach to the various views of parties, he mentioned that Egypt is embarking on a process of direct consultations with a broad range of parties and groups to better understand their perspectives and to ascertain the most appropriate landing zone on all matters of contention.

175. He advised that Egypt intends to deliberate with all interested parties on how to best utilise the findings of the Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC in providing the main guidance for all relevant outcomes at COP 27. In concluding, he mentioned the need to keep the momentum on raising ambition on all aspects of global climate efforts whilst continuing to push forward for enhanced implementation on all fronts, including on mitigation, adaptation, and finance. In this context, he highlighted the need to showcase success stories at scale, which will necessitate renewed critical commitments by major countries through enhanced support to developing countries, or at least a change in the conventional line of thinking by finance providers.

176. Denmark, represented by H.E. Mr Tomas Anker Christensen, Climate Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, informed that the United Nations Secretary-General has asked the Danish Prime Minister to be the Champion for Energy and announced that Denmark looks forward to examining, with IRENA and others, how to send the appropriate market signals at the short-term and take actions that can increase the deployment of renewable energy as a reaction to the energy crisis that the world is currently facing. He also acknowledged the Director-General's role in driving the Agency forward and in working with Denmark on scaling important projects as Denmark is party to the ambitious launch of the Global Offshore Wind Alliance with the Global Wind Energy Council and IRENA at COP 27.

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

177. The Chair invited facilitators of the regional groups to report on the status of consultations on the slates of nominated candidates for the 2023-2024 IRENA Council.

178. In its capacity as Facilitator of the Africa Regional Group, Egypt informed the Council that the group agreed on the nominations of Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe as Council members for 2023-2024, and Mauritius, Togo, and Uganda as alternates, and he confirmed that the Africa Group will submit the slate of nomination to the thirteenth session of the Assembly.

179. Bangladesh, the Facilitator of the Asia and the Pacific Regional Group, announced that as of 11 March 2022, nine Members from the Asia and the Pacific Group presented their candidacy for Council membership for the period 2023-2024, in which one Member presented its candidacy as an alternate. He advised that Tonga, as the sole representative from the Pacific Islands, will be allocated one of the six Council member seats. He reported the non-consensus to date on the remaining nominations of Council members and alternates, and confirmed that consultations will strive to ensure a fair and equitable agreement amongst candidate countries and thereafter, all Members of the regional group will be informed accordingly.

180. Greece, the Facilitator of the Europe and Others Regional Group, reported that as of 4 March 2022, ten Members expressed their interest in the Council membership, covering the seven seats for Council members and three seats for alternates. He reported that Greece will continue holding consultations and strive to ensure fair and equitable agreement amongst candidate countries to reach a consensus, and all Members of the regional group will be informed accordingly.

181. Antigua and Barbuda, the Facilitator of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Group, reported that as of 25 March 2022, five Members expressed interest in Council membership – in alphabetical order: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Honduras, and Panama for Council members, and Uruguay for Council alternate. He informed that Antigua and Barbuda, as the sole candidacy from CARICOM members, will be allocated one of the three Council member seats for 2023-2024, according to rule 70 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of IRENA. He also informed the Council that Uruguay will be allocated a seat as a Council alternate for 2023-2024. With regard to the rest of the composition, Antigua and Barbuda informed the Council that a consensus has not yet been reached. He advised that Antigua and Barbuda will continue to hold consultations and strive to ensure fair and equitable agreement with candidate countries to reach a consensus on membership and alternates of the Council, and all Members of the regional group will be informed accordingly.

182. One delegation from the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Group provided views on this matter.

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

Agenda Item 10. Closing of the meeting

184. In his closing remarks, the Director-General expressed his gratitude to Members on the recommendation of the Council for the renewal of his tenure for a second term. He noted the effective work in all areas during this meeting of the Council and he invited Members' suggestions to streamline the proceeding of the Council meeting, including in-depth discussions to enable a more effective exchange on key aspects of work in specific areas. He conveyed his appreciation to Uruguay as Chair, and Norway as Vice-Chair for the smooth conduct of deliberations. He thanked the participants for contributing to the discussions, for sharing their national achievements and for their contribution to IRENA's mission.

185. In his closing remarks, the Chair expressed his appreciation and honour to chair the meeting of the Council and highlighted that Uruguay continues to fight to protect the environment through national advancements in sustainable energy as the sole source of electricity. He affirmed that Uruguay will continue to work with IRENA to maintain the Agency's leadership in the energy transition and to ensure that renewable energy is the main source of energy in the world. He thanked members of the Council for their commitment support. He also thanked the Director-General and IRENA staff for all the support received.

186. The Chair declared the twenty-third meeting of the Council closed.

Twenty-third meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 24-25 May 2022

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Organisation of work**
 - a. Election of officials
 - b. Adoption of the agenda
- 3. Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023**
- 4. Reports on Collaborative Frameworks**

Member Interventions – General Interventions, including on items 3 and 4 above

Exchange of National Experiences
- 5. Presentation of the Director-General pursuant to paragraph III (i) of the Addendum to document A/5/5**
- 6. Note of the Director-General – Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027**
- 7. Administrative and Institutional matters**
 - a. Staff Tenure Policy
 - b. Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021
 - c. 2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA
 - d. Report of the Director-General – the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken
 - e. Report of the Chair of the Ethics Advisory Board
- 8. Arrangements for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council**
- 9. Any other business**
- 10. Closing of the meeting**

Twenty-third meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 24-25 May 2022

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Programme and Strategy Committee (hereafter “PSC” or “Committee”) met on 17 May 2022. All Committee members attended the meeting, including Algeria (Vice-Chair of the PSC). The Committee reflected on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, including updates on the Collaborative Frameworks, and focused discussions on the Note by the Director-General on the Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

At the opening, the Committee observed one minute of silence for the passing of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. The Agency expressed its condolences to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates as well as to the members of Sheikh Khalifa’s family.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in her summary below to be presented to the Council at its meeting on 24 May 2022.

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

1. Progress Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (C/23/2), including updates on Collaborative Frameworks

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

- The PSC welcomed the progress made in the implementation of programmatic activities, and expressed gratitude to IRENA for its work in this regard.
- Participants welcomed the Agency’s growing Membership and the high number of States in Accession that signals IRENA’s importance and relevance in the energy space .¹
- A participant reflected on several programmatic activities, most notably the World Energy Transitions Outlook (WETO) and its rising prominence as analytical output. Participants also took note of the work undertaken under the Climate Investment Platform (CIP) and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing (ETAF) Platform and called for promoting synergies with other financial organisations and initiatives. Participants also inquired about

¹ There are currently 17 States in the process of accession: Andorra, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Chile, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste and United Republic of Tanzania.

the peer-review process in IRENA's publications and analytical work and encouraged additional discussions with Members.

- Participants welcomed the establishment of the Collaborative Framework on Critical Materials, and called for avoiding duplication of efforts and for enhanced coordination among all IRENA Collaborative Frameworks, while stressing the importance of avoiding duplication the mandates of other organisations. In addition, participants looked forward to the establishment of a Collaborative Framework on Oil and Gas sectors, and recommended that additional Collaborative Frameworks may be created once some of the existing ones conclude their work.
- Participants noted the upcoming COP 27 in Egypt and COP 28 in the United Arab Emirates and encouraged active engagement.
- The PSC provided some recommendations on the presentation of information in the Progress Report, specifically regarding the sources of funding in the Work Programme Implementation Matrix section for all activities, and a more nuanced progress bar to help Members understand whether support is needed with lagging implementation.

2. Note by the Director-General – Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 (C/23/3).

The Deputy Director-General introduced the Note on the Draft Framework for the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

Denmark, in its capacity as co-facilitator of the Medium-term Strategy Working Team together with Kenya, provided a brief summary of the discussions thus far. Denmark also noted that a meeting of the Working Team took place shortly before this Committee meeting and after the IRENA Secretariat had already shared sessional documents. These new elements will be reflected in the updated version of the Draft Framework.

Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC expressed appreciation for the inclusive and transparent process of developing the Medium-term Strategy and encouraged the continuous engagement of Members in the process.
- The PSC welcomed the work undertaken thus far by the Working Team, and noted with appreciation that numerous comments were made and specific language proposals submitted on the Draft Framework during the meeting of the Working Team held on 11 May 2022.

- The PSC noted that the Draft Framework is a well-balanced and well-structured document that constitutes a good basis for discussion, while reiterating that many elements of the current Strategy remain valid. Participants also welcomed the renewed urgency to accelerate the just and inclusive energy transition.
- Participants supported the strategic direction behind the proposed mission statement. Some participants proposed further nuancing of the mission statement, including adding reference to the 1.5°C goal, energy access and a systemic nature of the energy transition.
- Participants welcomed the expanded focus of the pillar structure including International Collaboration and Network Hub, underlining the importance of multi-lateralism and the need to avoid duplication of efforts. Participants called for refining the language under the Global Voice for Renewables pillar to be focused, specific and promote systemic change.
- The PSC welcomed the addition of a pillar on Facilitator of Renewables Deployment and underscored that IRENA should continue not to be an implementing agency. Some noted the need to further nuance the language in this regard. Participants also highlighted the need for projects that have a systemic impact and focus on areas that need help such as proof of concept and crowding in the private sector.
- The PSC expressed reservations about the addition of a sixth pillar on Efficient and Agile Institution as it is a prerequisite and an enabler rather than a stand alone objective, and suggested as an alternative that these elements remain in the next MTS, as is the case currently.
- Participants welcomed the proposal to broaden the IRENA resource base, as programmatic activities are increasingly becoming more complex. Participants also look forward to discussions on the Renewables Accelerator Fund, which will be an important addition to the diversification of the Agency's resource base.

Twenty-third meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 24-25 May 2022

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Administration and Finance Committee (hereafter “AFC” or “Committee”) met on 18 May 2022. It reviewed matters related to Staff Tenure Policy, Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021, Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken, and the 2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board.

At the opening, the Committee observed one minute of silence for the passing of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. The Agency expressed its condolences to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates as well as to the members of Sheikh Khalifa’s family.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in his summary below to be presented to the Council at its 23rd meeting on 25 May 2022.

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

The following comments and recommendations were made:

1. Report of the Director-General – Staff Tenure Policy

- The Secretariat, in its presentation, reiterated its proposals to harmonise staff tenure, including granting the Director-General the flexibility to approve exceptional extensions of Agency staff for up to 3 years beyond the authorised limits. The Secretariat also outlined further Human Resources initiatives that could enable the Agency to become an employer of choice (in particular: inclusion of IRENA in the Inter-Agency Agreement and inclusion of IRENA staff in the UNPF; introduction of new performance management system and recruitment and work & life balance policies; development of a robust learning/training policy and staff development plan also including an online learning platform). A summary of issues raised by Members in the Open-Ended Group (OEG) was also provided, including the next steps to conclude the tenure discussion.
- One participant requested a list of organisations participating in the UN inter-agency agreement².
- Several participants requested the Secretariat to provide a brief summary of data and trends in support of the tenure harmonisation to the Council, so that the necessary steps can be taken to conclude the tenure policy discussion by the twenty-fourth Council meeting in October 2022 and the Assembly session in January 2023. They further noted that the initiative of IRENA with regard to the UN inter-agency agreement is worth further analysis and requested an update on this initiative.

² Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the UN Common System of Salaries and Allowances –
<https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/handbook//Inter-Organization%20Agreement%20010112.pdf>

The participants underlined the need for preparing and implementing a succession plan as part of its HR Policy in ensuring smooth transitional arrangements and continuity of the work of the Agency.

- The Secretariat confirmed that it stands ready to continue working with Members in the context of the OEG to address all outstanding issues based on the proposed timeline.
- The Director-General invited the AFC to favorably consider the Agency's proposals on tenure harmonisation and flexibility of granting up to 3-year extensions on an exceptional basis given the role and knowledge of IRENA staff in the scientific and programmatic work on renewables and energy transition that the Agency has been leading over the years. The DG concluded his remarks by assuring the AFC that the Secretariat will provide any additional analysis and data in support of the tenure proposal.
- The AFC took note of the tenure presentation and the proposal to continue work in the context of the OEG to conclude this topic towards the twenty-fourth Council meeting.

2. Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021

- The Secretariat introduced the 'Audited Financial Statements of IRENA for 2021', contained in document C/23/4.
- A participant noted the assessed contributions receivable and encouraged Members to pay outstanding contributions in a timely manner. The participant also requested details on the core budget surplus. The participant further enquired about the impact of the pandemic on travel and meeting expenses during the biennium 2020-2021 and asked about impact of the return to normal operations on the mentioned expenditures.
- The Secretariat responded that the core budget surplus was deducted from Members' assessed contributions in the following year. The Secretariat further responded with regard to the pandemic that the travel budget was significantly reduced due to meetings being held virtually and expected that travel related costs are expected to increase, highlighting that the Agency will utilise the lessons learnt during the pandemic to ensure efficiencies by using virtual means where possible.
- One participant commented on the positive overall financial position of the Agency. The participant enquired about the reason for higher expenditure under consultant and contractual services compared to staff related expenses since 2020.
- The Secretariat responded that due to the nature of its operations, the Agency engages the services of international experts through short-term consultancies. The Secretariat also noted that further details can be provided on outcomes achieved from consultancy services.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

3. Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken

- The Director-General introduced the 'Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken' as contained in document C/23/6.
- One participant commented on the cost increase for consultancy services, and requested additional details on the nature of concerns highlighted in the Internal Audit report with regards to consultancy management practices as well as proposed changes or actions to be taken by management to address the recommendations. The participant also requested for more clarity on when the Human Resources Directives will be updated to reflect these changes.

- The Secretariat clarified that the report highlighted several matters including, inter alia, the nature of work performed by consultants, simplifying the processes for engaging the services of consultants, and reviewing and adjusting consultancy fees and consultancy selection processes based on lessons learnt from COVID 19. The report made recommendations to improve consultancy management processes that IRENA has in place.
 - The Secretariat further clarified that the Human Resources Policy Manual is currently in the process of being revised both for staff and consultancies. The review process is ongoing and once completed, the Human Resources Policy Manual will be updated to reflect actions taken to implement Internal Audit Office recommendations as well as take into consideration the outcome of the ongoing study in this regard.
 - The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council for its consideration.
- 4. 2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA**
- The Secretariat introduced ‘2021 Annual Report of the Provident Fund Management Board on Operations of the Staff Provident Fund of IRENA’, contained in document C/23/5.
 - The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

Twenty-third meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 24-25 May 2022

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