

Twenty-second meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 26-27 October 2021

REPORT

OF THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

OF THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

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

1. The twenty-second meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was held in a hybrid format in Abu Dhabi on 26-27 October 2021. The meeting was attended by 19 Council members: Algeria, Colombia, Denmark, El Salvador, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Somalia, Switzerland, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zimbabwe, as well as 7 alternates: Canada, China, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Italy and Uruguay. Also, in attendance were delegations of 32 other IRENA Members and 1 other country.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

2. The Chair of the twenty-first meeting of the Council of IRENA, Japan, represented by Mr Hoshino Masashi, Director of Overseas Energy Infrastructure Office at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, opened the meeting and expressed his gratitude to the Director-General of IRENA and the Host Country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), for facilitating the in-person aspect of the meeting in line with prevailing health and safety regulations.

Agenda Item 2: Organisation of work

a. Election of officials

3. **The Council elected by acclamation Japan, represented by H.E. Mr Ishii Masahiro, State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, as Chair, and Zimbabwe, represented by Dr Gloria Magombo, Secretary for Energy and Power Development as Vice-Chair of the twenty-second meeting of the Council.**

4. **As proposed by the Chair, Norway, represented by H.E. Mr Sten Arne Rosnes, Permanent Representative to IRENA, was appointed as Rapporteur of the twenty-second meeting of the Council.**

5. The Chair of the twenty-second meeting of the Council of IRENA, H.E. Mr Ishii Masahiro expressed his commitment to ensure meaningful discussions, in cooperation with the Vice-Chair. He explained that the world's economic recovery from COVID-19 increases the demand for natural resources, and he attributed the rise in costs to factors such as an insufficient supply of resources, low regional resource inventories, a lack of sufficient upstream investment and an increased demand for thermal power generation caused by unfavourable weather conditions. Noting that energy is the supporting foundation for all social and economic activities, he highlighted the importance that Japan places on achieving carbon neutrality and a stable, affordable energy supply that aligns with the country's Strategic Energy Plan and Global Warming Countermeasure Plan, in accordance with Japan's 2050 Carbon Neutral Declaration and the new emission reduction target for 2030. In this regard, he informed of Japan's intentions to promote efforts to maximise the introduction of renewable energy, with a target of 36 to 38% by 2030, which is double the 2019 power source mix.

6. The Chair encouraged IRENA to continue leading the discussion to ensure progress in the global energy transition through its analysis and recommendations for Members and expressed his hope that the Agency will continue to play a leading role through the *World Energy Transitions Outlook* (WETO) and the Collaborative Frameworks. In this regard, he highlighted the importance of concrete support for realistic and diverse energy transition plans that reflect the needs and circumstances of each Member, whilst promoting engagement with stakeholders.

7. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to the UAE, as Host Country, for facilitating the physical presence of Council members and alternates in Abu Dhabi during the hybrid meeting of the twenty-second Council. He thanked Japan and Zimbabwe for their leadership as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively of the Council meetings and welcomed the 300 registered delegates, representing almost 100 Members. He welcomed all delegates attending in the virtual format and extended a warm welcome to the Central African Republic and Honduras, the two newest Members of IRENA as of 27 August 2021 and 19 September 2021 respectively.

8. Highlighting global efforts to accelerate the energy transition, the Director-General advised that significant progress must be made in light of the unprecedented increase in temperature and emphasised the importance to ensure energy access for all. He recounted that the 2030 destination stipulates a more resilient and inclusive energy system that will halve the current carbon emissions and shift towards an equitable world that leaves no one behind, and noted that much is being done globally to create momentum for the energy transition, with a growing number of countries striving for a net zero energy future through renewable energy. He highlighted that growing recognition of the key role of renewable energy in creating jobs, reinventing industrial strategies, and creating new partnerships has heralded a crucial shift from fighting outdated rhetoric to focusing on solutions to transform the energy system so deeply embedded in today's economy.

9. The Director-General explained that IRENA's holistic approach on the promise of renewables for universal energy access, energy security, climate change and a just and inclusive process are at the heart of the quest for resilience and equity and he noted that the promotion of IRENA's message is amplified through its 166 Members, with the impact reflected in forward-looking policymaking and the accelerated deployment of renewables, as well as the progress on complexity of tasks which are reflected in the empirical and analytic work of IRENA. He underscored the acute awareness of the diversity of abilities and needs within IRENA's global Membership. In the examples he presented, the Director-General mentioned the *Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2021*, issued in October 2021 and compiled in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), which reflects that 12 million people worked in renewables in 2020 - half a million more than 2019 - and echoes the resilience of the sector in the face of the health and economic crises. He noted that while these jobs are concentrated in a small number of countries and regions, the untapped potentials for growth are vast. Noting the same pattern in renewables deployment, he highlighted that while renewable energy consisted of over 80% of new power capacity in 2020, only 2% of the 260 GW added globally was in Africa, where the access needs are the greatest. He advised that the understanding of the problems must be converted to solutions.

10. On the shaping of the Agency's work by the Council for the coming biennium and beyond, the Director-General affirmed that the choices made in the programmatic and strategic direction must operationalise knowledge to become a practical tool for Members and ensure that IRENA and Members stay ahead in the dynamic energy space as there is a large quantity of work to be done within a limited time span, thus leaving no room for error. He acknowledged the value of the insight, perspectives, feedback, and guidance that will be provided by Members during the Council meeting and beyond.

11. Dr Gloria Magombo, in her capacity as Vice-Chair of the Council, expressed her appreciation to Members for electing her to continue to serve as Vice-Chair. She complimented the Director-General and the IRENA staff for their continuous work and efforts despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and noted that the growing Membership evidences the impactful work and contributions of the Agency. She reiterated the need to extend energy access as only 2% of additional capacity was installed in the African continent in 2020 and she noted that this presents an opportunity for Africa to develop access programmes without serious workforce redundancies through renewable energy.

12. Dr Magombo relayed Zimbabwe's struggles on the issue of access and advised on the introduction of a number of policies, such as the development of the Energy Efficiency Policy, and programmes to increase the share of renewables in the energy mix while ensuring that no sector is left behind, for which the procurement framework being worked on will be through competitive bidding. She conveyed that, with the support of IRENA, Zimbabwe has realised its resource potential in terms of solar and wind through the resource rezoning in 2019 and the economic assessments of the solar PV and small wind sites. She also conveyed that Zimbabwe has made investments into the small hydro area, and tremendous growth is experienced in the solar industry. The Vice-Chair expressed Zimbabwe's keen interest in the Collaborative Frameworks, and she emphasised the importance of IRENA continuing with the programme of country engagements to ensure extensive outreach and technical support to Members.

b. Adoption of the agenda (C/22/L.1)

13. The Chair introduced the 'Provisional Agenda' (C/22/L.1) and described the procedure to ensure all interventions are heard should any technical issues be encountered by participants attending through the virtual platform.

14. The Council considered and adopted the Agenda for its twenty-second meeting (C/22/1).

c. Adoption of the report of the twenty-first meeting of the Council (C/21/SR/L.1)

15. The Chair introduced the Draft Report of the twenty-first meeting of the Council, contained in document (C/21/SR/L.1).

16. The Council considered and adopted the draft report of the twenty-first meeting of the Council, contained in document C/21/SR/L.1.

Agenda Item 3: Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 (C/22/2; C/22/INF/2, C/22/CRP/1 and C/22/CRP/2)

17. The Director-General highlighted that the difficulties posed in the last months could not have been foreseen when the current Work Programme was adopted in January 2020. Despite the challenges, however, IRENA continued advancing its important mission. He continued by thanking Members for their active participation in the work of the Agency, in particular through the Collaborative Frameworks as well as for including the Agency in their efforts, among others in the work of the G20, Energy Compacts in the context of the UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy, and other initiatives. He underlined the importance of this close engagement and cooperation in enabling the Agency to advance its important mission.

18. The Director-General underscored that the biennium has been extraordinary in many aspects. The new focus on energy transitions is a welcome change, given the impending deadline for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the stark warning issued by the IPCC on the worsening climate crisis. In this respect, he stressed the need to be agile and embrace the opportunities that emerge.

19. He pointed out that IRENA played a prominent role in the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy. During the year-long preparatory process, the Agency led the energy transitions track, along with UNEP and ESCAP and in partnership with the Champion countries - Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Denmark, Germany, India, Nigeria, Spain, and the United Kingdom. He thanked them for the support provided during this period and stressed that IRENA's important mission and messages were integrated in many aspects of the process.

20. He underlined that the Dialogue was an important milestone but maintaining the momentum is more critical. He referred to the meetings with the UN Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General in early October, in which they agreed on concrete steps to link IRENA's work with the UN agenda. Among other things, IRENA and the UN will collaborate closer with the UNSG's country representatives to ensure they are appraised of IRENA's work and can draw upon the Agency's capabilities and expertise.

21. The Director-General noted that IRENA is working to help ensure the success of COP26 by continuing to dedicate significant resources in support of NDCs. IRENA had worked with over 70 Members and the impact of this effort is reflected in the Agency's contribution to the development of many NDCs. Throughout the year, IRENA has also supported the COP26 Presidency in their efforts and several initiatives and continues to lead the energy group of the Marrakesh Partnership for the Global Climate Action in UNFCCC.

22. The Director-General highlighted that the Agency's credibility and authority to work on these important global topics and milestones has been enabled by IRENA's extensive empirical and analytical base. He then emphasised an important directional shift that was introduced in this biennium. Specifically, and in line with the focus on real-life impact, IRENA forged partnerships that would help widen its reach. He highlighted the engagement with the private sector, in line with the guidelines released last year, given that the energy transition will be realised only if private sector resources are channelled toward this direction. IRENA also made the effort to be more accessible in its analytical and empirical work and operational in its work with countries and other partners. The Director-General underlined that the results of these shifts are already visible, and the Agency will take it to the next level in the coming programmatic and strategic cycles.

23. He expressed sincere gratitude for the timely payment of assessed contributions, and for the core non-assessed contributions from the UAE for the Headquarters in Abu Dhabi and from Germany for IRENA's Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC) in Bonn. He also highlighted the generosity of several Members who provided Voluntary Contributions, including Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea and the Walloon Region of Belgium. He underlined that they enabled IRENA to take the programmatic delivery to a different level. The Director-General also thanked the UAE and the Flanders and Walloon regions of Belgium for their support to the FDCR. In conclusion, he stressed that the replenishment of this Fund will be critical for the inclusive and transparent work of the Governing Bodies, as in-person meetings will gradually resume.

24. Mr Dolf Gielen, Director of IITC gave a brief progress report on the Agency's activities in the area of innovation and technology. He highlighted that IRENA prepared about 10 reports since May 2021 and another 20 reports are under development. Referring to IRENA's efforts to engage Members, he stressed the challenges posed by COVID. Yet, the Agency organized over 75 virtual events, attended by approximately 7,500 participants, and attended with IITC staff members 130 virtual events and meetings organized by IRENA members, partners and stakeholders. He underlined that the impact of these activities was significant. The Agency prepared a report on Offshore Renewables Action Agenda for the G20, and in the context of the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy, IRENA prepared an Energy Compact with the European Union, and developed the Green Hydrogen Compact Catalogue together with Denmark, Chile and Germany. Mr Gielen emphasised that the translation of analysis to action is considerable as these Compacts will lead to around 270 gigawatts (GW) of renewable capacity; around 130 GW of electrolyser capacity and 26 million tons of green hydrogen production.

25. Mr Gielen highlighted that the African Union selected IRENA to develop the power sector Master Plan for Africa. IRENA will work with partners in developing the vision for energy transition in the power sector in Africa, considering the circumstances of different countries, impact on interconnectors, investment needs etc. IRENA will also help with the design of enabling policy frameworks and mobilising necessary investments.

26. Turning to the Collaborative Frameworks, Mr Gielen mentioned that a meeting of the Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/Offshore Renewables took place on the margins of the World Hydropower Congress. He added that the Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen also organised a meeting to discuss the Roadmap on Enabling Measures for Green Hydrogen. Mr Gielen concluded by underlining the importance of green hydrogen for the energy transition and the need to put frameworks in place to promote its deployment, with due regard to regional contexts.

27. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi, Director of Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre (KPFC), highlighted that the full report of the World Energy Transitions Outlook, launched in June, further expands the preview's insights on finance and policy, and on measuring the socio-economic footprint of the pathway that IRENA proposes. She stated that according to the analysis, if the needed investments and holistic policy frameworks required are implemented, then GDP, employment and welfare will be higher under the 1.5-degree pathway than under planned policies. She continued that in addition to the socio-economic and environmental dimension, the new IRENA welfare index now captures distributional and energy access dimensions, which are very often overlooked.

28. Ms Ferroukhi clarified that these global estimates hide disparities at the regional and national level, calling for a more nuanced understanding of contexts and tailored approaches. IRENA is currently undertaking such work in several areas such as Africa and its five subregions, the result of which will be published under IRENA's Renewable Energy Market Analysis in the coming months. The analysis focuses on the socio-economic impacts of the energy transition for each region and specific countries. She added that IRENA is also carrying out similar analysis for Japan, Indonesia and the ASEAN region, under IRENA's economic footprint series, also to be launched in the next months.

29. She stated that key topics in the analysis, which are also on top of decision-makers' agenda, are jobs and livelihoods. Accordingly, Ms Ferroukhi highlighted the launch of a special edition of IRENA's annual review on *Renewable Energy and Jobs*, in collaboration with the ILO, on 21 October 2021. Stressing the importance of diversity and inclusiveness, she referred to the upcoming launch of the Agency's Gender in Solar PV Industries report and the work on education and youth engagement. Ms Ferroukhi also highlighted the upcoming launch of the joint report with SELCO Foundation on decentralised renewables and livelihoods at IOREC in December 2021 and of the joint report with FAO on renewables and agri-food systems.

30. Ms Ferroukhi noted that these topics are also at the heart of the discussions of the Collaborative Framework on Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions, co-facilitated by USA and South Africa, which convened a meeting on 21 October 2021. She stressed that IRENA's focus beyond technology choices is also reflected in the work of the Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation, co-facilitated by Germany and the UAE.

31. She underlined the continuous stakeholder engagement with the Coalition for Action, which now counts 125 members. The Coalition has also launched two new and very active Working Groups on Sustainable Energy and on Jobs and Agriculture in Renewables, bringing the total up to six. She concluded by referring to IRENA's continuous provision of capacity building and technical assistance on policies and data to facilitate evidence-based decision-making, including site and suitability assessment services tools to support municipal policymakers in renewable energy deployment as well as support on auction design and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) enhancement and implementation.

32. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Engagement and Partnerships (CEP), focused his presentation on IRENA's country and regional activities. With regard to IRENA's NDC work, he stated that in the run up to COP26, Members have been adopting ambitious and far reaching energy transition commitments, reflected in their NDCs. He also highlighted that through IRENA's dedicated service offerings in various finance, policy and technology areas, the Agency has engaged with 70 countries through 144 workstreams of activities. These are related to NDC

enhancement and the implementation of the NDC energy components. He added that IRENA continues supporting Members in submitting, updating or enhancing their NDCs as well as with the development of long-term strategies and scenarios. He stressed that IRENA's contribution has been acknowledged in the updated documents.

33. Mr Gonul highlighted the recently launched Renewable Readiness Assessments (RRAs) for Belarus, Botswana, Paraguay, and Tunisia, and noted that RRAs for Burkina Faso and Kyrgyzstan are being finalised, while the process has already been initiated for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Sudan. He added that IRENA's ongoing activities and engagement with Indonesia and Malaysia includes multiple streams of work such as Energy Transition Outlooks, which combine RRAs with Roadmap analysis and are complemented with power system flexibility and socio-economic analysis. Since its inception, IRENA has completed RRAs in about 50 countries, by providing clear guidance to policymakers on implementable actions, strengthening renewable energy frameworks and the well-defined scope of IRENA's future collaboration with the country.

34. He underlined that IRENA continued efforts to foster dialogue and exchange on key topics of the energy transition. IRENA has organised annual meetings of the Global Geothermal Alliance that put emphasis on promoting direct use applications in district heating and cooling systems as well as agri-food sectors. He also stressed efforts to include more practitioners into the process and develop guidelines based on their experiences. Mr Gonul also referred to the upcoming IOREC Conference to take place on 7-9 December 2021, focusing on the energy-end use sector nexus. This reflects IRENA's ongoing efforts to reinforce climate adaptation action.

35. Mr Gonul mentioned the partnership frameworks that bring together public, private, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors to support and accelerate global energy transformation efforts. He highlighted that Energy Compacts reflect strong multi-stakeholder alliances that IRENA has formed with Governments and other stakeholders. An example is the Compact formed by IRENA and the European Commission to prepare Regional Transition Outlooks for Africa, Latin America, and Europe, in line with the Paris Agreement. IRENA will also facilitate project facilitation through the provision of investment readiness and mobilisation of USD 3,000,000,000. He also referred to the Compact IRENA formed with AOSIS, in the context of the SIDS Lighthouse Initiative, to support SIDS in achieving 10 GW renewable energy capacity by 2030 – an increase of 5GW since the initial target has already been met. IRENA also formed a Compact with the International Geothermal Association to enhance the Association's for geothermal heating and cooling by 2030. Mr Gonul also underscored that together with several key health and agri-food stakeholders, IRENA has committed to undertaking several country level readiness assessments in these sectors. He concluded by stating that the Collaborative Framework on Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems held its most recent meeting on 20 October 2021.

36. Mr Ahmed Badr, Director of Project Facilitation and Support (PFS), discussed the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform (ETAF), to be launched at the end of the year, which will build on the success of the IRENA/Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) Funding Facility. He announced that ETAF will be a global ground-breaking partnership and that by using the same model, will initially mobilise USD 1 billion and aim to attract additional USD 2 billion. He underlined that the Platform will aim to generate at least 1.5GW generation and storage capacity, and stressed that the Platform is fit-for-purpose due to IRENA's global energy transition comparative advantage, and that it leverages the convening power of the old facility while utilising new financing models to attract the private sector, de-risk etc. He added that IRENA and the UAE's Special Envoy for Climate Change agreed to sign a Joint Declaration launching the ETAF Platform by the end of the year. In addition, the Director-Generals of IRENA and the ADFD will sign a Letter of Intent upon completion of negotiations. Mr Badr pointed out that IRENA continues supporting Members with projects initiated under the old Facility, ensuing their positive socio-economic impact.

37. Turning to the Climate Investment Platform, Mr Badr mentioned that there are more than 280 registered partners, including 57 registered financial institutions such as multilateral development banks, and 265 projects submitted for consideration. He clarified that only 52 projects have currently passed the set criteria for technical assistance and facilitation support, from which 33 have already received support, whereas 17 are already completed and ready for matchmaking. He added that 14 projects have already been introduced to partners and 8 have been matched. Mr Badr highlighted that these 8 projects have attracted USD 1.2 billion to generate 470 MW and offset 5 million ton of CO₂-equivalent.

38. Mr Badr elaborated on IRENA's provision of technical assistance to Members by referring to 3 out of the 17 projects. He mentioned that IRENA provided open solar contracts and immediate technical assistance to Sudan to scale up a 100 MW project, as well as assistance to Georgia to receive funding from the Global Climate Fund (GCF) for renewable energy projects. In addition, IRENA provided technical assistance to Sanasa Development Bank in Sri Lanka to open up and provide loans.

39. Mr Aboubacar Toure, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS), pointed out that the core budget implementation rate was at 89%, as of 31 August 2020. Despite the global challenges, the Agency is currently on track to reach 100% delivery by the end of the year. He stressed that the implementation rate is at similar level as at the last biennium, when 99.1% implementation was reached. For the current biennium, the Agency received USD 20 million, representing 100% of core non-assessed contributions, and he extended thanks to the United Arab Emirates and Germany.

40. Mr Toure noted that during 2020-2021, IRENA received USD 7 million to date from an overall commitment of USD 10.05 million in voluntary contributions. He continued that, as of 15 October 2021, the Fund for Developing Country Representatives (FDCR) received USD 132,000 from the United Arab Emirates as well as from the Flanders and Walloon regions of Belgium and expressed IRENA's gratitude for this continued support. He added that during the reporting period, IRENA has received USD 12.9 million for this biennium from multi-year agreements. Lastly, he highlighted that human resources trends cover Professional and higher and General Service staff on fixed-term and temporary appointments, funded under regular (core) and project (non-core) budget. Mr Toure stated that as of 31 August 2021, 196 out of the 202 core and project staff positions are encumbered or are under recruitment.

41. Ms Elizabeth Press, Director of Planning and Programme Support (PPS), reported on the self-assessment report, pointing out that the Medium-term strategy envisaged that at the end of the biennium, IRENA would undertake a performance review. She reflected on the monitoring and evaluation strategy as IRENA had committed to enhancing it in the beginning of the cycle. As such, several tools were introduced to improve IRENA's systematic monitoring and evaluation. She explained that IRENA introduced an annual directive from the Director-General for all Divisions to operationalise the programmatic document and have it translated into actionable outputs. IRENA has been also systematically collecting data during the biennium through several different modalities such as media monitoring, event feedback, and tracking of activities and events.

42. Ms Press mentioned that in the context of the evaluation IRENA undertook two activities: first, an independent external evaluation in 2020 followed by interviews taken with several countries to get direct feedback on IRENA's performance, on what worked well and what has not. She stressed that the self-assessment report focuses on impact, as requested by Members. Ms Press also pointed out that with regard to the Work Programme, IRENA had to deliver 54 outputs in the biennium; it is anticipated that they will be fully delivered, with some necessary adjustments due to COVID.

43. Ms Press underlined the importance of core and extra budgetary resources, as voluntary contributions and resources beyond core have considerable impact on the Agency's ability to deliver. Going forward and in line with Members' requests, she noted that IRENA will report regularly and with detail on these activities, including also by type, time and resources available.

44. The Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), the United States of America, represented by Mr David Henry, Director, Office of Energy Transformation, Department of State, presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 19 October 2021, as contained in document C/22/CRP/1.

45. The Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC), the Maldives represented by Mr Ahmed Ali, Director-General, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology presented the outcome of the Committee meeting held on 20 October 2021, as contained in document C/22/CRP/2.

46. Delegations expressed appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council for their leadership, to the Secretariat for organising an in-person meeting of the Council, and to the UAE for making it possible. A delegation encouraged IRENA to share the lessons learned from the online engagement during the pandemic and to suggest the way forward on the best meeting format, bearing in mind the importance of in-person interactions.

47. Delegations welcomed the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 and congratulated the Director-General and the Secretariat on its implementation, especially during these challenging times. Some delegations commended the layout and illustrations of the report, flagging the accessibility of information and ease of sharing. Delegations also welcomed the Work Programme Self-Assessment and encouraged IRENA to enhance the qualitative assessment of the impact of IRENA's work and of the obstacles encountered.

48. Delegations thanked IRENA for the important contribution to the UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy and the support provided in preparation of impactful Energy Compacts such as the Green Hydrogen Compact Catalogue.

49. Delegations commended IRENA for the data collection and analysis in support of the energy transition, the Agency's strong insights on the issues on the ground, and its role in bringing renewables into the mainstream by providing knowledge, policy and implementation support to Members. One delegation called on the Agency to further enhance support to implementation, while another suggested even closer international cooperation on the energy transition, and underlined that IRENA is the appropriate forum for those efforts. One delegation also expressed appreciation for the balanced resource allocation between the four strategic objectives and suggested a relative reduction towards the global voice of renewables given the positive developments in the sector.

50. One delegation underlined that the World Energy Transitions Outlook is an excellent example of the type of impact IRENA can have on the energy debate, while another stressed that WETO showcased that the energy transition is feasible but requires increased and urgent efforts and investment. Another delegation invited the Agency to explore the pandemic's negative effects on investments and further deployment of renewables in developing countries.

51. Delegations stressed that the energy transition provides an opportunity for growth and prosperity, and the need to communicate its positive effect on job creation and socioeconomics in general, and one delegation welcomed the *Renewable Energy and Jobs* report and its findings.

52. One delegation underlined the importance of embracing innovative solutions to disseminate renewables and realise SDG7 and encouraged IRENA to conduct studies on green hydrogen, desalination of water, storing of energy, and electrical vehicles.

53. Delegations referred to the recent energy prices increase and shortage of fossil fuel in some countries and regions, which further accentuates the need for international collaboration for a smooth energy transition. In this context, a delegation commended IRENA's Global High-Level Forum on Energy Transition.

54. Delegations elaborated on their national strategies to enhance deployment of renewable energy by 2030, initiatives to build infrastructure and batteries for green hydrogen, and the overall decarbonisation efforts, especially through industry reforms and promotion of technologies.

55. Delegations welcomed IRENA's increased engagement with other actors in the energy space, including the private sector, as the energy transition requires cooperation at all levels. Delegations encouraged IRENA to continue to strengthen collaboration with other entities, drawing on respective comparative advantages. One delegation referred to the work of the International Solar Alliance to make solar power an affordable and reliable source of energy in developing countries. The delegation also expressed appreciation for the efforts by the UAE in achieving economies of scale in solar power. One delegation elaborated on the activities and reports prepared during its G20 Presidency and how it benefited from IRENA's expertise. This delegation underlined the importance of involving youth in the energy transition process and discussed the various activities organised with their participation. The delegation invited IRENA to jointly educate young generations on the green energy transition and relevant initiatives.

56. Delegations commended the Collaborative Frameworks as successful platforms for meaningful Member engagement, with the participation of experts and the private sector. One delegation remarked that IRENA should showcase specific results and the Frameworks' impact. Another delegation thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken under the Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation.

57. One delegation appreciated the work of the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower, noted the World Hydropower Congress and the San Jose Declaration, and invited Members to the upcoming Conference on Hydropower, scheduled for autumn 2022, and co-hosted with IRENA. The Conference will focus on challenges in attracting financing for hydropower. Delegations welcomed the Conference and invited IRENA to share the lessons learned to help African countries attract investment.

58. Delegations expressed appreciation for their successful collaboration with the Agency, including through projects funded through voluntary contributions, and called on Members to strengthen their collaboration with IRENA.

59. Delegations welcomed the growing number of projects under the Climate Investment Platform (CIP). They also encouraged IRENA to play a major role in supporting increased financing for project implementation, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

60. One delegation encouraged the Agency to share more information on the established staff structure within IRENA to support the work of the CIP. The delegation suggested the establishment of a collaborative platform on issues and experiences related to in-country technical assistance, project preparation, and matching with funders, to benefit from synergies and knowledge exchange. The delegation also inquired on the direction the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing Platform (ETAF) is taking, how its activities will be differentiated from those under the CIP, the level of staffing to be committed and how it will fit within the Secretariat's existing mandate.

61. Delegations pointed that as WETO showed, and the IPCC report supported with findings, the window for action on climate change is narrowing. Delegations underlined that climate change is a common threat that can only be addressed through collective efforts and underscored the increased ambition and widening of net zero commitments towards the 1.5 degrees goal, despite the pandemic. One delegation called on IRENA to assist Members in ensuring the achievement of both SDG 7 and SDG 13.

62. Delegations noted with appreciation the recent IRENA analysis on renewables as a key means for climate change adaptation strategies and called on Members to join forces to implement such strategies and mandate IRENA to include adaptation in its work.

63. Delegations thanked IRENA for its contribution to the development of NDCs and invited the Agency to continue to provide examples of how its work is affecting the energy debate and influencing the NDCs.

64. One delegation highlighted that COP26 represents a critical juncture in global efforts to address the climate challenge and take ambitious measures in the lead up to discussions. Delegations thanked IRENA for the key role it played during preparations and encouraged the Agency to help deliver ambitious COP26 outcomes and ensure their implementation. Delegations also highlighted the importance of COP26, as it marks the first NDC assessment under the Paris Agreement, recognising the need for accelerated efforts towards decarbonisation, and thanked IRENA for its contribution to preparations for the Conference.

65. The Council took note with appreciation of the Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, contained in C/22/2 and the Work Programme Self-Assessment 2020-2021, contained in C/22/INF/2, and decided to submit them, with the necessary updates, to the Assembly for consideration.

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (C/22/3)

66. The Director-General introduced the item and underlined the importance of the next steps for our shared future, given there are less than ten years left to fulfil the promise of the 2030 Agenda and shift to an energy path aligned with the Paris Agreement. He noted that developments in the energy sector have an oversized impact on the achievement of international agreements, but there is a new level of pressure to act. He remarked that the proposed Work Programme has drawn from Member inputs and IRENA's experience in the implementation of the work to-date. The Agency focused on ensuring cost-effectiveness, maximum impact of work, and bringing the energy discourse to the next level, since renewables have now become a mainstream vision for the energy future. The overarching goal is to create a feedback loop that will perfect IRENA's outputs and ensure practical application of the knowledge acquired through country support and convening of activities.

67. The Director-General added that the World Energy Transitions Outlook will be the organising framework to guide all aspects of the Agency's work. IRENA will continue updating the WETO to account for the dynamism of the energy sector and stay abreast of the latest developments. He pointed out that IRENA's excellence in renewables is essential, and that the Agency will make significant efforts to show their wide-ranging potential, especially in the end-use where much remains to be done. He underscored the importance of continuous work on green hydrogen, along with several other topical priorities, including critical minerals, end-of-life recycling, and reuse. He mentioned that as in the first edition of the Outlook, IRENA will go beyond the technology pathway and provide policy, finance, and socio-economic analysis, an element that sets WETO apart from other scenarios and has real-life value.

68. He mentioned that one of the central priorities for the coming years will be to translate WETO into regional outlooks. Regional Energy Transition Outlooks (RETOs) will provide pathways aligned with the development and climate priorities of regions and provide a clear picture of the policy, finance, and socio-economic shift to maximise benefits and manage adverse impacts. He highlighted that IRENA will continue to support the overriding policy priority of a just and inclusive transition for a more equal world, building on the long-standing work in these areas. Moreover, RETOs will frame all of the Agency's regional work, most notably in support of investment and project facilitation.

69. The Director-General clarified that due to pandemic-related delays, the Agency could not hold investment forums as planned in the current programme but ensured that all is in place to implement this initiative in the next biennium. He stressed that the world is entering a new phase of energy transition and it is paramount to be innovative, stretch traditional boundaries and take transformative actions that will meet multiple objectives. Therefore, IRENA will work at the cross-section of energy and areas such as health, food security, water, education, gender, and indigenous communities, while considering wider socio-economic and geopolitical implications of the shift to renewables. He underscored the need for a holistic approach to accelerate mitigation, improve resilience and adapt to the reality of climate change. In this respect, he proposed holding a Ministerial meeting on adaptation at the next IRENA Assembly, to reflect on the nexus between water, food, and renewable energy.

70. The Director-General mentioned the Agency's resources have featured in Member discussions on the next Work Programme. Recognising the challenge of reconciling programmatic ambition with the financial reality, he pointed out that this year has been even more challenging, considering the difficult economic circumstances of many Members. Bearing this in mind, he proposed to keep the core assessed budget at the level of the current programmatic cycle. He clarified that this would mean the Agency would work based on the budget of 2020, while accounting for new Members' contributions, in line with previous practice.

71. He then extended appreciation to the UAE, as the host country of IRENA's Headquarters and also thanked Germany, as the host of the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre in Bonn, noting that this year marks the ten-year anniversary for the core non-assessed resources Germany is providing. He also expressed gratitude to Members for providing voluntary contributions, which enable the Agency to deepen and widen its reach. He added that the proposed Work Programme integrates the activities envisaged to be supported by voluntary contributions to promote current program delivery, and transparent resource availability. The Director-General remarked that the future key objective must be to secure a sustainable balance between core budget, voluntary contribution, and other resources. To this end, he proposed resuming the work on the Renewables Acceleration Fund, which Members started in 2018, and pursue a multi-donor trust fund, in line with applicable regulations. This would enable IRENA to tap into diverse funding resources and secure a stable resource base in support of a successful programmatic cycle.

72. He concluded by stressing that this Work Programme draws on the Agency's comparative advantages in the evolving energy landscape and sets the stage for the next phase of international cooperation for a positive change.

73. The Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), the United States of America, represented by Mr David Henry, reported on the Committee's consideration of the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 from the PSC meeting held on 19 October 2021, as contained in document C/22/CRP/1 (Annex 2).

74. Delegations welcomed the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 and thanked IRENA for the inclusive process in its development, incorporating their inputs to the document.

75. Delegations underlined the need to keep accelerating the development and deployment of clean technologies and sustainable solutions to realise development and climate goals. One delegation stressed that renewables have become a mainstream energy option in developed and developing countries alike and are considered as one of the main paths to respond to climate challenges. Another delegation expressed support for IRENA's efforts in the field of technological innovation, including e-mobility and energy storage technologies as an essential component for the integration of renewables in small, isolated power systems.

76. A delegation welcomed the fact that the proposed Work Programme is built on the conclusions of WETO. Delegations supported that IRENA's four strategic objectives should continue in the next biennium. One delegation emphasised that IRENA's programmatic activity for the biennium should contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's 2063 Agenda.

77. Delegations underlined that translating WETO into Regional Energy Transition Outlooks will be a step in the right direction to guide policymaking, and lead to socio-economic development, while achieving the climate imperatives. One delegation stressed the need to continually renew the WETO and RETOs given the ever-changing energy landscape. Several delegations encouraged IRENA to enhance its outreach and communication efforts to capture maximum attention. One delegation preferred to convert the WETO framework into programmatic activities, on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Members.

78. One delegation remarked the need for data being converted into strategies and projects, while another stressed that the lack of access to energy in many developing countries, especially in Africa, remains an obstacle to poverty eradication and socio-economic growth, and called on IRENA to strengthen its work on the topics.

79. One delegation commended IRENA for its central role in international cooperation to promote renewables-based energy transitions and encouraged the Agency to stay on this path. Another delegation looked forward to the expanded cooperation with IRENA on the Energy and Climate Track, in the context of the G7 Presidency.

80. Delegations emphasised the importance of IRENA forums in promoting synergies and knowledge exchange among stakeholders and proposed restarting discussions on co-organising the 7th International Conference on Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency.

81. Delegations elaborated on their domestic net zero and renewables strategies, national hydrogen roadmap, initiatives to promote innovation, clean technologies, energy efficiency and international cooperation efforts for a decarbonised future. One delegation invited Members to the Tokyo "Beyond Zero" Week in the fall of 2022.

82. One delegation remarked on the plans to explore complementarity between decarbonisation and SDG Agenda including gender equality, empowering indigenous peoples and youth, access to affordable energy, and local economic opportunities, among others. One delegation welcomed the inclusion of the Climate Investment Platform and the Energy Transition Accelerator Financing platform into the proposed Work Programme. Regarding CIP, the delegation looked forward to more projects being matched and the inclusion of private financing, while another called for more equitable distribution of renewables projects. Delegations also welcomed the establishment of the Renewables Acceleration Fund.

83. Delegations welcomed IRENA's proposal to keep net assessed contributions unchanged, being mindful of budgetary pressures.

84. One delegation underscored the importance of translating IRENA written outputs into all United Nations official languages to enable widespread global communication.

85. Delegations stressed that IRENA could play a significant role in enabling the implementation of COP26 decisions and beyond. Delegations called on Members to remain vested in the outcomes of COP26, reassess their level of ambition, identify the most important areas that emerge from COP26 and review IRENA's role in helping Members meet their ambitions. One delegation noted that IRENA will play a key role in the implementation and progress tracking of the Breakthroughs Agenda, to be launched at COP26, commended Member cooperation to ensure a successful Conference and noted that the Proposed Work Programme recognises IRENA's central role in the process.

86. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 (C/22/3) and decided to submit it to the Assembly on the understanding that the feedback and comments received at this Council will be reflected in the report.

Agenda Item 5: Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 (C/22/4)

87. The Director-General introduced the Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2023-2027, contained in document C/22/4. He explained that the current Strategy will come to an end in 2022, and that the last Assembly set out a process for the development of the next five-year MTS, which included a regular discussion at every meeting of the Council and the forming of a Working Team to support this work.

88. The Director-General noted that the Working Team – consisting of 21 Members who have expressed interest in joining it – already held a meeting, under the able leadership of Denmark and Kenya. The meeting took place on 8 September 2021 and was attended by 26 Members. He thanked Members for their interest in contributing to the process and underlined the importance of hearing as many voices as possible when shaping the next phase.

89. Reflecting on some of the points that emerged at the meeting, he stressed Members' agreement that the current MTS continues to be relevant, which echoes the findings of the external evaluation of the MTS undertaken in 2020. He then mentioned that the Working Team highlighted several comparative advantages of IRENA, including its global Membership that is unmatched by any other energy entity, and the Collaborative Frameworks that are considered effective peer-to-peer exchange and greater engagement platforms of stakeholders, including the private sector.

90. The Director-General underlined that the upcoming Strategy will be implemented during a critical period as by the end of 2027 the world will have a clear picture on whether SDG7 and the 2030 Agenda will be achieved. He also stressed that it will also be evident whether the renewables-based energy transition is progressing at the necessary pace or bogged down by distractions; in other words, whether the world has a fighting chance for a 1.5-degree future. In conclusion he underscored that Member guidance in shaping the Agency's work to be the driver of the transformation of the global energy system, at service of all of its Members, will be critical, and thanked Denmark and Kenya for facilitating the Working Team and Members for engaging.

91. H.E. Mr Kariuki Mugwe, Permanent Representative of Kenya to IRENA and Co-lead of the Medium-term Strategy Working Team then reported on the first meeting of the Working Team held on 8 September. Echoing the words of the Director-General, he thanked all Members that participated in the meeting, which offered the opportunity to have the first exchange on the topics of strategic relevance for the Agency and identify the areas to discuss to help shape the upcoming Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027. He noted that he co-chaired the meeting together with H.E. Mr Franz-Michael Mellbin, Permanent Representative of Denmark to IRENA.

92. H.E. Mr Mugwe stated that Members recognised that the current strategy continues to be relevant, a fact that should be reflected in the new strategic direction. He stressed that ensuring all countries progress at the same pace and leaving no one behind is an overriding priority. He noted that the Agency's universal Membership and global reach were specifically highlighted as IRENA's comparative advantage. He also stressed that the Agency must remain relevant to all Members, and therefore, the MTS should be focused, but also offer sufficient space for agile programming, given the evolving energy landscape.

93. He underlined the critical role international collaboration and initiatives such as the Collaborative Frameworks play in promoting energy transition and that they should have a principle focus in the next Strategy. He also added the importance of partnerships and engagement with the private sector.

94. H.E. Mr Mugwe referred to the several suggestions put forward to make IRENA's analytical priorities and their refinements accessible for policy making. For example, data and modelling should be accompanied by policy recommendations and capacity building. He underlined that strategies to support the post-COVID-19 recovery remain important, together with the realisation of net-zero goals and strategies, including on hard to abate sectors, and mentioned that another critical topic to discuss is energy security, including how to ensure stable power systems as an area of common interest. He noted that Members emphasised the need to bridge the technology gap, with a specific focus on Africa, given the great energy access and clean cooking needs. He also pointed out that the imperative of a just and inclusive transition underlines all these points.

95. H.E. Mr Mugwe referred also to the reflection on the Agency's resource base to enable IRENA to deliver its important mandate, a topic that should be taken up in more detail in the upcoming discussions. In closing, he stated that based on these discussions, the co-leads together with the Secretariat, developed a proposal for a work plan for the coming period.

96. H.E. Mr Franz-Michael Mellbin, Permanent Representative of Denmark and Co-lead of the Medium-term Strategy Working Team took the floor to present the proposed work plan that drew on Member inputs from the first meeting of the Working Team. He explained that the work plan will help guide discussions and the development of the next Medium-term Strategy to be presented to the Assembly for its consideration at its thirteenth session in January 2023.

97. H.E. Mr Mellbin clarified that the work plan is a living document that will be refined as needed, and stated that based on the discussions held, a general orientation of topics to be considered in more depth has emerged. He noted that it has become clear that the changing energy sector requires careful consideration of IRENA's positioning in the global energy landscape as a leader of the energy transition and a driver of real-life change.

98. He stressed that a key question is how to ensure that IRENA continues to deliver around its key pillars of activity and stated that it will be essential for IRENA to continue being a centre of excellence and a source of high-quality, timely analytical and empirical output, also in the context of regional approaches to better address gaps and identify opportunities. IRENA's role as a global voice on renewables is of immense importance, and he therefore underlined the need to consider how to ensure that this trusted voice is heard among the many others that are entering the field. H.E. Mr Mellbin stressed the importance of engaging with the private sector and proposed that the Working Team has a dedicated discussion on how to broaden private sector participation in the energy transition and facilitate mobilisation of private capital.

99. H.E. Mr Mellbin underscored the need to exchange on how to best use IRENA in ensuring rapid energy transitions for all Members, given its global Membership. He explained that this is particularly important considering the unique combination of IRENA's mandate and global reach, which is one of the Agency's main comparative advantages. He also mentioned the proposal for the Working Team to have a dedicated discussion on enabling IRENA's delivery through a stable resource base.

100. In addition, he stressed that the Working Team will continue operating in an inclusive and transparent manner. A combination of physical and virtual meetings is envisioned to be held, while written input from Members and key stakeholders will also be considered. The co-leads also aim to engage Permanent Representatives in Abu Dhabi as appropriate and required, possibly holding a meeting after COP26, while considering other opportunities to get the most input in the process as possible.

101. Referring to the calendar of meetings, he explained that the co-leads aim to hold a physical meeting, preferably, on the margins of the twelfth session of the IRENA Assembly and possibly on 14 January 2022, taking into account the health regulations as well as the number of Members confirming their participation in this meeting. He closed by stating that two more meetings will take place prior to the Council meetings in 2022, most likely in April and September 2022.

102. The Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), the United States of America, represented by Mr David Henry, reported on the Committee's consideration of the Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 from the PSC meeting held on 19 October 2021, as contained in document C/22/CRP/1.

103. Delegations thanked the Director-General and the IRENA Secretariat and welcomed the Note on the Medium-term Strategy. They also expressed their appreciation to Denmark and Kenya for their leadership of the Medium-term Strategy Working Team. One delegation also thanked the co-leads of the MTS Working Team, for convening the first Working Team meeting and encouraged IRENA to share a calendar of meetings to allow for enhanced participation.

104. Delegations highlighted the global consensus on the central role of renewables in decarbonisation and enabling sustainable development, and the need to accelerate the transition in a just and inclusive manner. Another delegation underlined that a just and inclusive transition can bring together climate and development goals. They emphasised IRENA's global reach and welcomed IRENA's work worldwide including in Africa and LDCs.

105. Delegations pointed out that renewables are now mainstream, which entails opportunities and challenges as Members strive to meet urgent climate and development goals, balance geopolitics, and navigate evolving market conditions. One delegation underlined that renewables will remain at the forefront of the international energy debate and called for discussions on how to facilitate access to this market and enlarge it. Another called for making progress in renewable energies, the development of regional interconnection, and energy efficiency.

106. Delegations welcomed the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the current MTS that the direction outlined in the strategy is valid and should continue to guide IRENA's work for the remainder of the time. A delegation proposed that the Working Team considers undertaking an additional evaluation to identify the components of the ongoing strategy that have not been achieved and should be transferred to the upcoming one.

107. Another delegation stressed the role of WETO and other important reports in developing strategies to overcome the challenges and guide the new strategy in identifying new priority areas. One delegation called for the strategy to be ambitious and flexible to allow for adjustments, considering the dynamism of the sectors and the need for accelerated actions to 2030, while another encouraged IRENA to prioritise its work to maximise output and impact. Delegations also stressed that the strategy should enable IRENA to simultaneously contribute to the fight against climate change, the promotion of sustainable post-COVID recovery and sustainable development overall.

108. Delegations noted that some of IRENA's key comparative advantages include its universal Membership and the strong support it receives from Members, which should be leveraged to achieve development and climate goals. One delegation underlined that the new strategy should

strengthen the IRENA brand as the only multinational, global agency with an exclusive focus on renewables. Delegations supported that IRENA should be a clearly differentiated, cutting-edge organisation that is authoritative, leveraging its convening power, analysis and data, and good policy propagation capabilities to lead the energy transformation.

109. Delegations called on IRENA to encourage Members to raise their ambition and level of commitment by stressing the socio-economic effects and benefits of clean energy transition. Delegations highlighted that IRENA's work on socioeconomics, including the *Renewable Energy and Jobs* report, is a key strength of the Agency that should continue.

110. Delegations encouraged IRENA to start focusing more on short- and medium-term targets (to 2030) rather than only on long term to 2050. One delegation encouraged IRENA to continue to promote coherence between medium- and long-term objectives.

111. Delegations shared their national net zero strategies and one delegation pointed out that Members have a common goal but there are several pathways and renewable energy technologies to be deployed according to their national circumstances, geographies etc. and as such, IRENA's country level analysis is critical.

112. One delegation underlined the significant role green hydrogen will play in the energy transition and called for enhanced work and collaboration in the context of IRENA, noting the many unknowns regarding supply and trade. Others stressed that IRENA can play a key role in promoting emerging technologies, particularly hydrogen and energy storage.

113. One delegation stressed the importance of providing Members with guidance on how to undertake a cost-effective energy transition, including examining the role of the private sector and available technologies. Another delegation highlighted the importance of communication and raising awareness that despite challenges and obstacles, the world is on the right track.

114. Delegations underlined the need to follow geopolitical developments and assess the geopolitical implications of the energy transformation, while also considering the current volatility in energy markets. One delegation called for discussions around supply chains and critical minerals.

115. Delegations stressed the importance of Members' active engagement in IRENA's various platforms and that the Collaborative Frameworks are an excellent platform to build on.

116. Another delegation stressed that tackling climate change calls for results-based strategies, efficient implementation and monitoring of projects and access to funding, even in times of financial crisis. One delegation commended IRENA for its support to Members with the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and noted that there is still scope for enhancement.

117. Delegations also encouraged IRENA to leverage instruments such as the Climate Investment Platform (CIP) to enhance flow of financial resources from developed countries to the emerging economies to fast track the deployment of renewable energy and reach common climate goals.

118. Delegations noted that the current financial situation renders it unlikely for IRENA or any other international organisation to receive significant additional core resources and encouraged the diversification of its resource base.

119. The Council took note of the Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027 (C/22/4) and the follow-up actions proposed.

Agenda Item 6: Reports on Collaborative Frameworks

120. The Chair invited the Facilitators to report to the Council on the outcome of the meetings of the Collaborative Frameworks on ‘*Enhancing Dialogue on High Shares of Renewables in Energy Systems*’, ‘*Geopolitics of Energy Transformation*’, ‘*Green Hydrogen*’, ‘*Hydropower*’, ‘*Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions*’ and ‘*Ocean Energy/ Offshore Renewables*’.

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

121. H.E. Mr Alvaro Ceriani, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to IRENA, in his capacity as Co-facilitator, with Canada, reported that amongst the six areas of focus identified through an extensive consultative process, two thematic meetings of the Framework addressed two crucial topics on the role of cross-border interconnections based on renewables and the optimised operation of energy systems with high penetration of variable renewable energy, with the first meeting in May 2021 focusing on opportunities and challenges in developing cross-border interconnections and regional markets based on renewables to support the transition to clean energy and align with the climate and Sustainable Development objectives. He informed that on 20 October 2021, 100 participants from 42 Members and States in accession attended the second meeting of the Collaborative Framework that focussed on the workstream of energy system operations, where the limitations of energy infrastructure to achieve a rapid transition to net zero emissions were discussed, and different options for enhancing grid capabilities and accelerating with modernisation through innovative approaches to facilitate the scale up of renewable electricity in countries were highlighted.

122. He noted further that discussions took place on the importance of innovation in electromobility, paired with smart charging to decarbonise the transport sector while implementing the demand side of management approaches. He recounted that participants exchanged experiences and best practices in the deployment and implementation of a variety of solutions and technologies, such as energy storage technologies and dynamic line rating to facilitate the integration of larger shares of renewable energy in the generation scheme of countries, as well as methods to effectively leverage advanced capabilities of variable renewables to enhance electrical grid operations and to avoid curtailment of renewable energy. He noted that IRENA provided a presentation on the new paradigm of energy systems, which suggests a more dynamic role for final users and highlights the need to enhance flexibility along the entire value chain and the crucial role of decentralised energy systems.

123. H.E. Mr Alvaro Ceriani further noted that IRENA presented its work on innovation to facilitate a rapid integration of variable renewable energy, showcasing examples of technology and strategic innovations, such as virtual power lines and smart charging of electric vehicles, as developed in the framework of the *Innovation Landscape for a Renewable-Powered Future* report, for which IRENA will expand its work in the forthcoming 2022 report with a focus on smart electrification of end use energy demand. He mentioned that the work on innovation for electrification is fulfilled with the support of a large network of experts and relayed that Members are invited to approach the Secretariat should they wish to actively engage in this stream of work and its discussions. He concluded that the discussion included the presentation of case studies on the implementation of utility scale battery storage auctions in Colombia, the use of smart charging of electric vehicles in Hamburg, Germany, and the implementation of dynamic line rating to enhance the integration of variable renewable energy into the power systems in different countries. H.E. Mr Alvaro Ceriani conveyed that the presentations set the basis for the interventions of 20 countries and regional and industry organisations, who offered their perspectives and insights on the operation of energy systems with high shares of renewable energy at a national and regional level. He announced that IRENA plans to continue to organise additional thematic meetings in the coming period as part of the pilot phase of the Collaborative Framework.

Collaborative Framework on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation

124. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany, Permanent Representative of the UAE to IRENA, Co-facilitator, with Germany, reported that much of the work in 2021 focused on the geopolitics of hydrogen given its high policy relevance and conveyed that the meeting in September 2021 was attended by more than 70 participants representing 30 Members, academia and other experts from across the energy and foreign policy disciplines.

125. She recounted that the meeting provided several Members the opportunity to share their reflections on the impacts of hydrogen development and noted that the discussion will feed into the report on the geopolitics of hydrogen which will be launched by IRENA at the twelfth Assembly in January 2022. She advised that while there are unknowns associated with the evolution of hydrogen production, use, and trade, the impact of hydrogen on geopolitical patterns will be evident along with its impact on energy security, even if it is not a leading driver for energy transitions. She noted the emphasis placed on the importance of standards and certifications for countries as they forge new partnerships as well as for the governance of the evolving hydrogen market. She recounted that several participants connected the advent of hydrogen with the geopolitics of the renewables-based energy transitions as per the report *A New World: The Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation* published in 2019, and that the Collaborative Framework reflected on the ongoing work on the energy-climate-security nexus whereupon there was agreement amongst participants that this remains a high priority topic for the coming years. She listed other suggested topics of focus which included clean energy supply chain, critical minerals, and interdependencies of electricity interconnections and grids, and announced that it was agreed that the Co-facilitators are to present a proposal for the 2022 work plan at the next meeting of the Framework.

Collaborative Framework on Green Hydrogen

126. Mr Samir Rachidi, Director of Research and Development at the Moroccan Research Institute for Solar Energy and New Energies, Co-facilitator, with the European Commission, reported on the status and planned activities and conveyed that the fourth meeting, held virtually on 21 October 2021, was attended by 70 participants representing 40 Members and States-in-Accession, and focused on two topics. First, to present the Enabling Measures Roadmap for Green Hydrogen and secondly to seek feedback from Members, to which he noted that the Roadmap was well received by Members and there was a broad consensus on the measures presented. He reported that several Members emphasised the importance of a certification scheme to be able to guarantee the renewable character of hydrogen for which a responsive and adaptive regulatory framework is needed, and he explained that the use of digital technologies, such as blockchain, were suggested to facilitate the process on which some Members have already moved to the piloting phase to derive some learnings. He noted that Members highlighted the need to develop hydrogen strategies and to link them to broader energy transition strategies, whilst exploring the decarbonisation of the energy system as a whole.

127. Mr Rachidi advised that Members supported IRENA's proposal to assist in the drafting and implementation of hydrogen strategies, including in less developed regions and SIDS, on both policy and technical aspects. He added that the Enabling Measures Roadmap for Green Hydrogen for Europe was presented and proved to be an example of the collaborative nature of framework as it was developed jointly by IRENA and the World Economic Forum, bringing the private and the public sector together. He conveyed that the roadmap builds upon the knowledge gathered during the third meeting of the Collaborative Framework, as well as the workshop on 10 June 2021, held by WEF and IRENA to gather insights from the private sector on enabling measures and multilateral governance frameworks to scale up the production and trade of green hydrogen. He added that while the Roadmap was initially developed with a focus on Europe, there are plans to develop roadmaps for other regions, with the one for Japan having already been finalised.

128. Mr Rachidi outlined that the second focus was to invite Members to consider future activities under the Collaborative Framework wherein the six key areas of work where IRENA could assist were identified, covering sharing of best practices, knowledge exchange, collaboration, coordination with other hydrogen initiatives, drafting and implementation of national hydrogen strategies, and simulating hydrogen demand uptake. He relayed that specific items were supported by some Members, with whom the Agency will follow-up to identify priorities and seek to activate the working groups.

129. He announced that IRENA hosted a workshop on 13 October 2021 with the European Commission, in collaboration with the German Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, as part of the Strategic Partnership for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA) initiative, to promote dialogue between the EU and North Africa on the challenges and policy measures needed to develop green hydrogen. He relayed that several North African States discussed the regulatory frameworks necessary to establish trade with Europe and that the informative discussion showed the value of the Framework's network in sharing developments to work effectively towards common goals. He recounted that the European Commission commended IRENA for hosting a successful private-public collaboration through the development of the Enabling Measures Roadmap and encouraged Members to support IRENA with its work plan to overcome the barriers in scaling up green hydrogen.

Collaborative Framework on Hydropower

130. H.E. Mr Francisco Chacón Hernández, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to IRENA, Co-facilitator, with Switzerland, reported that the Framework on Hydropower held two meetings since the twenty-first Council, the first being a consultation meeting on the San José Declaration on Sustainable Hydropower which is an effort championed by Costa Rica and the International Hydropower Association (IHA) to place sustainable hydropower as an essential element in tackling climate change, to highlight its key role in supporting all renewables, as well as other benefits. He explained that the aim of the meeting was to inform on the progress of the San José Declaration and to collect input and comments on the Declaration, during which a number of Members welcomed and complimented the initiative, and some expressed the intention to endorse it.

131. He reported that the second meeting was a High-level meeting on the side-lines of the World Hydropower Congress, hosted by Costa Rica and the IHA, which gathered decision-makers to raise awareness on key hydropower challenges worldwide and to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experience among its participants, with the objective to identify interesting opportunities and potential pathways and actions that would allow hydropower to fulfil its role as an enabler of the clean energy transition. He mentioned that participation in the meeting included the former Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull, and a panel of High-level officials from countries and organisations such as the African Union Commission, the Latin American Energy Organization, the United States Department of Energy, and the World Bank.

132. He further noted that delegations discussed and proposed a number of priority areas where IRENA could make an impact on hydropower which included the promotion of hydropower sustainability and the implications of the Hydropower Sustainability Standard, promoted by IHA, on policy and regulation, developing synergies with efforts by other organisations to facilitate greater integration of variable renewable energy (VRE) through hydropower, raising awareness on the role of hydropower in emissions reductions and climate change mitigation, serving as a platform for sharing knowledge, experience, and best practices amongst Members and other potential actors, promoting regional grid integration (in particular by facilitating planning at the regional level), and promoting and fostering high participation of women in the hydropower sector. He announced that the next meeting will be arranged to take place in 2022. He thanked Members for their active involvement in the Collaborative Framework on Hydropower and extended an invitation to Members who have not yet joined the Framework to participate in this important initiative.

Collaborative Framework on Just and Inclusive Energy Transitions

133. The United States of America, Co-facilitator with South Africa, represented by Mr David Henry, Director at the United States Department of Energy reported on the second meeting of the Framework which followed the meeting in May 2021 that adopted the general principles and modalities, with a focus on the enhancement of the Framework activities. He reported that the High-level launch of a special edition of the IRENA *Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2021*, which was developed in cooperation with the ILO, established the discussions for the second meeting wherein countries welcomed the proposal to focus on jobs and skills for just energy transitions, as well as on livelihoods for developing countries, and that participants highlighted the role of the Framework to create the space for policy discussions, fill knowledge gaps, capture best practices and solutions, as well as develop and disseminate tools and guidelines. He mentioned that several countries referred to their national experiences and expressed their readiness to share solutions and approaches in more detail as part of the Framework. He added that participants emphasised the need to consider domestic circumstances, capabilities, and the importance of analysis activities focusing specifically on regional and local challenges. He noted the emphasis placed by participants on the fact that the activities and the broader international discourse on just and inclusive energy transitions need to consider both procedural and substantive aspects, and conveyed that it was suggested to ensure that all countries are involved in international discussions and decision-making processes as an imperative procedure with the substantive work being centred on addressing the needs of both workers and communities.

134. Mr Henry listed the other key themes highlighted, which included ensuring diverse workforces and gender equality, quality of jobs, poverty eradication, economic perspectives especially for rural communities as well as communities adversely impacted by the energy transition, local value creation, and industrialisation. He mentioned the emphasis placed on connecting with leading countries and solutions, as well as a broad set of stakeholders, including labour unions, the private sector, and academics, where countries encouraged IRENA to continue to build strong partnerships with each other and actors in line with the close relationships the Agency has started to create with the ILO. He advised that the Co-facilitators would continue to work with the Secretariat and interested countries on the way forward and he encouraged Members to notify the Framework at any time on additional inputs and ideas.

Collaborative Framework on Ocean Energy/ Offshore Renewables

135. H.E. Mr Nicola Lener, Permanent Representative of Italy to IRENA, Co-facilitator, with Tonga, reported on the status and planned activities of the Framework which covers offshore and floating wind technology, wave, tidal, ocean, thermal conversion, and cylindrical gradient technologies, as well as floating solar photovoltaic technology. He advised that the third meeting of the Framework took place on 8 June 2021 –World Oceans Day – and was attended by 74 participants from 33 Members and States-in-Accession who provided valuable insights on their own strategies and accomplishments in the field of offshore renewables, which proved a strong existing momentum for these technologies. He informed that the meeting focused on two agenda items: Member input to the G20 Action Agenda for the deployment of offshore renewables commissioned by the Italian G20 Presidency to IRENA, and a discussion on best practices in regional collaboration for the uptick of offshore renewables, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.

136. H.E. Mr Lener recounted that Mr Paul Holthus, CEO of the World Ocean Council, addressed the meeting where he highlighted the importance of international collaboration initiatives that share a collaborative framework to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the SDG 14 on ocean protection. He mentioned that Dolf Gielen, Director of IRENA's IITC, presented the *G20 Action Agenda* developed by the Agency with the input of the Collaborative Framework, which was endorsed by the G20 and incorporated in the G20 Energy and Climate Communique.

137. He reflected that participants provided additional feedback to be highlighted in the acclaimed report, including the role of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in ocean governance, the role of G20 countries to support the deployment of offshore renewables in non-G20 countries, as well as the crucial importance of marine spatial planning to create synergies between stakeholders and increase public acceptance. He noted that the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) presented on the opportunity for regional collaboration on offshore renewables and the good practices drawn from existing cooperation, most notably in the North Sea area. He conveyed that Members highlighted several potential key topics for regional collaboration such as studies for offshore energy technology potential, establishment of roadmaps, as well as research and development for less mature offshore and ocean energy technologies. He advised that the fourth meeting of the Collaborative Framework will be organised in the context of the forthcoming UN Ocean Conference, and that Members have indicated the need for a discussion on best practices in the regulatory frameworks for offshore renewables. He informed the Council that the UN Energy Compact on Offshore Wind, elaborated by IRENA and GWEC, aims at deploying 380 GW of offshore wind installations by 2030 and 2,000 GW by 2050, which calls for the Collaborative Framework to become the key vehicle for international policy cooperation on the subject. He announced that IRENA will disseminate the outcome from the Framework's meetings in several events, most notably the upcoming annual Ocean Energy Europe Conference and Exhibition in Brussels on 6-7 December 2021.

138. H.E. Mr Lener congratulated IRENA for the great support to the Collaborative Framework, which creates the necessary platform for knowledge sharing that will lead to the acceleration of deployment, thanked Members for their active involvement and invited those not yet involved to participate and benefit from this unique platform. He praised IRENA staff for their competency and professionalism and the Director-General for his vision and leadership as the impact of efforts, knowledge and expertise of Members contributes to important multilateral agendas as the G20.

139. Delegations acknowledged the substantive efforts of the Collaborative Frameworks and deemed them to be an excellent example of sharing experiences and lessons learned, an effective mechanism for dialogue amongst Members and stakeholders, and a critical component of the global energy transition.

140. The Council took note of the Reports on the Collaborative Frameworks.

Agenda Item 7: Administrative and Institutional matters

141. The Chair, Japan represented by Mr Kikuchi Nobuyuki, Director of Resource Security Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the agenda item.

142. The Chair of the AFC, Mr Ahmed Ali, Maldives, reported on the meeting of 20 October 2021 wherein the Director-General noted the support of the twenty-first Council to lift the tenure policy for general service staff and wherein the Director-General also introduced the draft decisions on amendments to the tenure for general service staff as an annex to the document C/22/5. The Chair of the AFC conveyed that one participant thanked the Director-General and the Secretariat for providing more details on the current staff tenure policy and acknowledged the previous consensus on agreement to lift the tenure policy for general service staff, and that the participants reiterated that the professional staff and above should circulate in and out of IRENA to allow the Agency to remain innovative. He added that the participants indicated that they were open to considering options to harmonise tenure terms of professional staff and to also examine the exceptional circumstances that would allow the Director-General to seek extensions on tenure for said category of staff. He advised that the AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

143. He reported that the Secretariat introduced the following reports, the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions Advanced to the Working Capital Fund, Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations, Report of the Director-General Activities of the Internal Audit Office and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken on which the AFC took note of the reports and decided to submit them to the Council.

144. The AFC Chair also reported that one participant raised a point on ethics and protection against retaliation and suggested that the Ethics Office increase outreach to staff on ethics, policies and the functions of the Ethics Office, and to consider the need for further targeted training to increase confidence in the process for those individuals who are required to submit disclosures of conflict-of-interest forms. He noted that the participant further requested a more detailed report at the next reporting cycle, outlining strategies for outreach on ethics policies. The Chair reported that the Secretariat noted that it remained committed to improving the system and announced that there are no current pending cases. He recounted that the Secretariat informed the AFC that the Agency has policies in place to allow staff to report ethical concerns and misconduct, and that it continues to be part of the Human Resources and staff wellbeing strategy.

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

a. Report of the Director-General – Staff Tenure Policy (C/22/5; C/21/4)

146. The Director-General thanked Members for their flexibility in discussing the tenure policy and length of service for IRENA staff at the last meeting of the Council and at the meeting of Open-ended Group on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above.

i. Staff Tenure Policy – General Service staff

147. The Director-General introduced the Draft Decision as contained in the annex to C/22/5, contextualising the amendments to the tenure policy for General Service staff, which builds on the recommendations made by the Council at its twenty-first meeting. He also referred Members to the annex on the proposed changes to staff regulations and rules concerning the lifting of the tenure policy and the introduction of a mandatory retirement age for General Service staff.

148. Mr Aboubacar Toure, Director of Administration and Management Services, provided a detailed presentation of the Draft Decision and recalled that the twenty-first meeting of the Council considered the Report of the Director-General – Staff Tenure Policy, as contained in document C/21/4, and supported the proposal contained therein to lift the tenure policy for General Service staff, with the view to making a recommendation to the twelfth session of the Assembly. He submitted the Draft Decision on Amendments to the Tenure for General Service Staff of the International Renewable Energy Agency, as contained in the annex to C/22/5, for consideration by the Council at the twenty-second meeting and advised that it will be updated to reflect the Council's deliberations and guidance prior to submission to the twelfth session of the Assembly. He reported that the Draft Decision recalls the presentation of the Director-General on staff tenure policy and the proposal to remove the tenure policy and to introduce a retirement age for General Service staff and added that the Draft Decision takes note of the willingness of Members to exclude the General Service staff from IRENA's present tenure policy, and recalls that the Assembly provided the Director-General with the authority to extend the appointment of staff members recruited and serving the Agency as of 15 January 2017 for up to four years in addition to the period presently provided in the staff regulation 5.4 (b) and (c). He advised that the Draft Decision asserts the present urgency to formalise a decision on implementing IRENA's new policy on General Service staff tenure, as supported by the HR technical review on staff composition costing analysis and under the delegated authority of the Director-General.

149. Mr Toure advised that the Draft Decision reinstates Article XI paragraph C of the IRENA Statute and Staff Regulations 2.4 and 5.2, wherein staff members should uphold the highest standard of efficiency, competence, and integrity, whilst insisting on the fact that staff performance and programmatic needs shall continue to be the main consideration in the extension of staff appointments. He further advised that the Draft Decision considers that to reinforce the Agency's growing influence on the international stage and to remain responsive to the needs of Members, a timely strategy is required to ensure that the Secretariat is equipped with the expertise needed to meet growing demands in the coming years and to position IRENA as a competitive employer amongst comparable organisations in order to retain its highest performance. He added that consideration was given to the recommendation made by the Council at its twenty-first meeting, for the Assembly to amend the staff regulation to exclude the length of service and establish a mandatory retirement age of sixty-five for all General Service staff and he noted that the recommendation, conceptualised in the Draft Decision, proposes the following:

- (a) to adopt the proposed amendment on staff regulation 5.4 on lifting the length of service for General Service staff and the introduction of a new staff regulation 5.7 on the mandatory age of separation (i.e., retirement age for General Service staff) as set out in annex 1 attached to the Draft Decision, with the proposed amendment to the staff regulations in effect as of the date of adoption of this decision;
- (b) to take note of the proposed amendment to the staff rule 105.3, lifting the length of service for General Service staff as set out in annex 1; and
- (c) to request that the Director-General introduce any changes in the staff rules that are necessary to implement the amendments to the staff regulations adopted in this decision in accordance with the staff regulation 13.2 and 13.3.

150. The Director-General observed the consensus on the tenure policy for the General Service staff.

151. The Council took note of the report contained in document C/22/5 and agreed to submit the Draft Decision (Annex to C/22/5) to the Assembly for its consideration.

ii. Staff Tenure Policy – Professional staff and above

152. Dr Gloria Magombo, Zimbabwe, in her capacity as Facilitator of the Open-ended Group on the Tenure Policy for Professional staff and above - established in May 2021 to continue discussions and engage in an open dialogue with Members - provided a summary of the outcome of the meeting of the Open-ended Group held on 12 October 2021 in a virtual format and attended by 16 participants representing 13 Members. She mentioned that several participants noted that open-ended contractual arrangements would not fulfil Members' vision for the Agency as they underscored the importance for IRENA to maintain its standing as a leading authority in clean energy, innovation, and technology whilst responding to new challenges. On the flexibility for extensions, Dr Magombo advised that some Members expressed willingness to hold further discussions based on elaborations of the conditions for granting such extensions and she noted that participants reiterated the value of the existing tenure policy to attract new expertise and generate new ideas for the Agency. She recounted that the Secretariat welcomed and took note of the feedback and requests by Members for further justification as well as the need to provide additional information on the proposal regarding the open-ended appointments and she summarised that the Open-ended Group concluded that they are not in support of an open-ended contract for Professional staff and above, to which the Secretariat took note.

153. She underlined that some Members expressed willingness to align the tenure regulations granted to staff members recruited before 2017 to all IRENA staff members at the Professional level and above, to ensure equity, but that additional information was requested in terms of numbers and timeline for implementation. She reported that participants requested additional

information on the conditions and criteria for granting any discretion to the Director-General to extend staff contracts up to a maximum of three years after tenure and she informed the Council that the Secretariat emphasised that they would work on providing the criteria, conditions, and circumstances where the extensions could be applied and relayed that the Secretariat underscored that such extensions would not be applied across the board.

154. The recommendations of the Open-ended Group included the following:

- To further consider the alignment of the 2017 decision granted to professional staff members recruited before 2017 to all professional staff members.
- To further discuss the proposal to provide the Director-General exceptional flexibility to extend the contracts of professional staff and above for up to three years in rare and exceptional circumstances, the Council to recommend that the open-ended group continue to address the issue.
- To request further information from the Secretariat on the proposals in general, as well as the criteria and circumstances related to the proposal to provide the Director-General the flexibility to extend contracts for up to three years.
- To review any additional human resource concerns at IRENA in line with the agency strategy and what other international organisations are doing, in order to position IRENA as one of the best employers in the sector and to ensure IRENA's competitiveness in attracting the best candidates.
- To request the Open-ended Group to submit its final reflections at the 23rd Council meeting.

155. Three delegations reiterated their vision for the Agency to remain agile and maintain its leadership at the fore of the energy transition through the influx of fresh talent, and expressed that open-ended contractual arrangements would hinder the Agency from ensuring diversity, openness, dynamism of expertise, and an appropriate and reasonable geographic distribution of personnel. One delegation noted that the four-year extension was initially intended to avoid a staff exodus and expressed that an additional deferral of up to three years may serve only to defer the problem instead of actively seeking a solution. Delegations welcomed the proposal to continue the discussions of the Open-ended Group.

156. The Director-General thanked Members for their flexibility in discussing this item and noted that discussions at the Open-ended Group meeting recognised the need to align the tenure policy for all Professional staff and he affirmed that the Secretariat stands ready to continue supporting the discussions of the Open-ended Group, including to define the criteria and circumstances regarding the proposal to provide the Director-General the flexibility to extend contracts for up to three years in exceptional cases and to further examine the processes in other international organisations with a view to maintaining the competitiveness of IRENA's recruitment process.

157. The Director-General also mentioned that tenure is an important aspect as it can take 1 to 2 years to secure staff with the equivalent professional capacity as an existing staff member, which may place undue burden on the incoming staff member. He noted that he understood the concern of one delegation not to work only on the basis of exceptions but to define a new tenure policy that is in line with other international organisations. He expressed appreciation for the work of the Open-ended Group and welcomed the Group's proposal to continue discussions on the criteria for discretionary power of the Director-General to ensure that there is a clear and transparent application of extensions. He also welcomed a discussion that moves towards defining a tenure policy that is in line with other international organisations and that allows the Agency to be competitive in the recruitment of the best personnel.

158. The Chair noted that based on the report provided by Zimbabwe on the outcome of the Open-ended Group meeting, as well as the views expressed by Council members, that additional information is needed for further consideration of this matter by the Council.

159. The Chair therefore proposed that the Council continues its discussions on the proposals regarding the staff tenure policy for Professional staff and above, with a view to positioning IRENA as one of the best employers in the sector, and ensuring that the Agency remains competitive and attracts the best candidates.

160. The Chair also proposed that the Open-ended Group, facilitated by Zimbabwe, continue its discussions on the proposals on staff tenure policy for Professional staff and above, based on the additional information requested as well as a general review of other HR matters at IRENA, taking into account the current practice of other international organisations, and to present its recommendations at the 23rd Council meeting.

161. The Chair invited the Facilitator of the Open-ended Group to work closely with the Secretariat and inform Members on the arrangements for the discussions of the Open-ended Group.

162. The Council took note and agreed with the proposals of the Chair.

b. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund (C/22/INF/3)

163. Mr Aboubacar Toure presented the report as contained in C/22/INF/3 and explained that the report contains a complete status of contributions, with Annex 1, Status of Contributions of Members of the Agency as of 18 September 2021, and Annex 2, Status of Contributions of Members whose arrears reached or exceeded the amount of their contribution for the two preceding years as of 18 September 2021. He announced that since the date of the report, a further USD 2.9 million was collected from China, European Union, Morocco, Pakistan, Poland, and Republic of Korea.

164. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund as contained in C/22/INF/3 and decided to submit it to the Assembly.

c. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations (C/22/6)

165. Mr Aboubacar Toure presented the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations, as contained in C/22/6, and announced that the external auditor did not have any audit recommendations for 2020 and there are currently no open or pending audit recommendations.

166. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations, as contained in C/22/6 and decided to submit it to the Assembly.

d. Report of the Director-General – Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken (C/22/7)

167. The Director-General presented his Report and noted that the report covers the period from 26 April 2021 to 25 September 2021, and that the Internal Audit Office (IAO) implemented the following activities:

- performed a detailed gap analysis - as a part of the Quality Assurance Improvement Program required by the Institute of Internal Auditors' Standards and developed a plan for adherence to the IIA standards to enhance the IAO core foundation, based on the gap analysis performed;

- initiated the development of an audit dashboard - to keep track and periodically report to senior management on the progress of the implementation of audit recommendations and actions taken;
- initiated the audit of Consultancy Services - in accordance with the audit plan for the work programme and budget 2020-2021; and followed up the status of implementation of internal audit recommendations related to the previous audit on the Human Resource (HR) Policy Manual.

168. The Director-General noted that based on the results of the validation procedures performed by the IAO, the Division of Administration and Management Services (AMS) has drafted the revised text that will be incorporated into the next version of the HR Policy Manual upon completion of a comprehensive review of the Manual by a dedicated working group during the last quarter of 2021. He announced that the completed actions taken for the plan for adherence to the IIA standards as well as the audit recommendations and actions planned following the audit of consultancy services will be reported to the Council at its twenty-third meeting.

169. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General – Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken, as contained in C/22/7, and decided to submit it to the Assembly.

e. Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest (C/22/8)

170. Ms Jelena Barnes, Ethics Officer of IRENA, introduced the report and informed the Council on the implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest and on the disclosure of interest procedure for the period 1 October 2020 to 25 September 2021. She reported that confidential guidance and advice to staff on questions of ethics were provided, including disclosure of interest procedure as well as ethical standards that govern outside activities, and that no reports requesting protection against retaliation were received during the reporting period and that no issues requiring consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board emerged. She conveyed that on the Disclosure of Interest Form, 33 covered individuals were required to complete the Form for the 2020 filing cycle of which 94% of staff have complied with this requirement. She added that a review of their disclosures did not reveal any actual or apparent conflict of interest with the Agency. She explained that the mandatory online ethics course, Ethics and Integrity at IRENA, was completed by 94% of active staff as of 25 September 2021 and that all newly appointed staff are required to complete the course as a part of their induction process. She noted that continuous efforts will be made to increase the awareness of ethical behaviour and conduct and compliance of all staff with the Agency's ethical standards.

171. The Council took note of the Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest, as contained in C/22/8, and decided to submit it to the Assembly.

Agenda Item 8: Arrangements for the twelfth session of the Assembly (C/22/9; C/22/INF/4)

172. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to the Host Country and announced that the twelfth session of the Assembly is scheduled for 15-16 January 2022 with IRENA Members and States-in-Accession joining in person at the St. Regis Hotel in Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi and with observers attending virtually – said arrangements are subject to change depending on measures associated with the pandemic – and will be preceded on 14 January 2022 by Ministerial and High-level sessions. He recounted that the upcoming Assembly session provides a timely opportunity for the Membership, partners, and stakeholders to engage in an inclusive and diverse discussion on actions to shift the energy transition to the next level in the context of moving from

commitments to implementation in the Decade of Action, and how the Agency can support Members in creating enabling frameworks that attract investment and accelerate the energy transition at the speed and scale necessitated by climate, energy, and development imperatives.

173. The Director-General noted that the official opening of the twelfth Assembly on Saturday, 15 January 2022 will include High-level statements by the Presidency of the Assembly and the Host Country and that there will a High-level meeting on the follow-up from COP26 and outcomes of the UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy, for which the UN Secretary-General has accepted an invitation. He conveyed that an invitation will also be extended to the Presidency of COP26 to present the results of the COP and explain how international cooperation may support the follow-up and implementation of the commitments resulting from COP26, and he further conveyed that the UNDP and SEforALL will be invited to speak on commitments coming from the High-Level Dialogue thus providing a unique occasion to position IRENA, with its global Membership, as the place where the energy transition can be discussed with all Members on equal status and to understand the barriers, solutions and avenues for partnership. He conveyed that the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 and Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 will be presented to the Assembly, reflecting the feedback received from Members at the Council meeting.

174. The Director-General informed that a Ministerial event on SIDS, as well as a High-level meeting of the Global Geothermal Alliance will be held prior to the Assembly session and a Ministerial meeting on Renewable Finance and Investments will be convened, to focus on how governments, partner institutions and other key actors can enhance collaboration to advance climate investment in developing countries. He announced that a series of meetings will take place on 13 January 2022 in a virtual format, as part of IRENA's continued outreach and engagement with stakeholders, and that the 2022 IRENA Legislators Forum will explore the challenges and successes countries are facing on the road towards a sustainable energy future with an emphasis on the role of Members of Parliament in the energy transition, and the benefits that may be attained. He addressed the intention to understand the link between the work of legislators and that of regulators. He further announced that the 2022 IRENA Youth Forum will provide the opportunity for youth to share their perspectives on several topics linked to renewables and sustainable development and the role that young people play in the promotion and shaping of a renewables-powered, sustainable energy future for all. He advised that the Public-Private Dialogue will bring together policymakers, private sector representatives, and community stakeholders to discuss opportunities to build on discussions held at this Council on the actions needed to accelerate the pace of the energy transition.

175. The Director-General informed the Council that the Ministerial roundtables on Renewable Energy in End-use Sectors and on Flexible and Smart Grids will take place on 15 January 2022, and he conveyed that several Ministerial plenary sessions are scheduled for the morning of 16 January 2022 to present pressing issues related to the energy transition in the coming decade and beyond, such as the geopolitics of hydrogen, international cooperation for a just and inclusive transition in developing countries, and the contribution of renewable energy to climate adaptation, particularly in the food, water, and energy nexus, building on the strong partnership that IRENA has established with the FAO.

176. Delegations supported the arrangements and requested the timely circulation of the provisional agenda and programme to enable Members to prepare for the important discussions and requested clarification on the topics to be discussed at the Ministerial roundtables. Delegations also requested confirmation of the date for the discussion of the agenda items on administrative matters of the Agency, and details on the in-person arrangements. One delegation welcomed the discussion on the outcomes of COP26 and offered its support to the Agency on this topic.

177. In response to interventions, the Director-General advised that sessional documentations will be transmitted to Members by 15 December 2021 i.e., one month before the Assembly, and he informed the Council that invitations, with the main topics of the agenda listed, were already sent. He highlighted the importance of discussing arrangements for the Global High-Level Forum on Energy Transition, which may serve as a platform for periodic reflection on the implementation of commitments from the UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy and COP26, and for measuring the momentum of collective action in the energy transition.

178. The Chair reminded Members that the twenty-first meeting of the Council requested that the Secretariat, in collaboration with Samoa and the UAE, prepare an information document outlining the processes, timelines, and the necessary administrative steps in case of renewal for a further term of the incumbent IRENA Director-General. He informed that this information, contained in document C/22/INF/4, is intended to provide the Membership with information in preparation for discussions in 2022.

179. The Council took note of the arrangements for the twelfth session of the Assembly, as contained in C/22/9, as well as the update provided by the Director-General on additional topics at the twelfth Assembly and approved the arrangements.

180. The Council agreed that the twelfth session of the Assembly will take place on 15-16 January 2022, with related meetings on 13 and 14 January 2022. The Council also took note that the dates of the meetings are subject to change owing to the evolution of measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agenda Item 9: Arrangements for the twenty-third meeting of the Council

181. The Chair noted the proposal for the twenty-third meeting of the Council to be held on 24 and 25 May 2022 in Abu Dhabi, with the meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council scheduled for 23 May 2022, bearing in mind that the dates and format of the meetings are subject to change depending on measures associated with the pandemic.

182. The Chair noted the proposal for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council to be held on 18 and 19 October 2022 in Abu Dhabi, with the meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council scheduled for 17 October 2022, noting that the schedule is subject to final determination by the Council at its twenty-third meeting.

183. One delegation highlighted a conflict of the dates for the twenty-fourth meeting in October 2022 suggesting that the dates of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council be amended if possible, which was supported by another delegation.

184. The Council took note and agreed that the twenty-third meeting of the Council will take place on 24-25 May 2022, with meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council scheduled on 23 May 2022. The Council also took note that dates are subject to change depending on the evolution and measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

185. The Chair informed the Council that expressions of interest were received from Uruguay to serve as Chair and Norway as Vice-Chair respectively, of its twenty-third meeting.

186. The Council considered and approved the proposed arrangements for the designation of Uruguay as Chair, and Norway as Vice-Chair, of the twenty-third meeting of the Council.

Agenda Item 10: Any other business

187. H.E. Dr Nawal Al-Hosany expressed her appreciation to Council members and alternates for attending the meeting in Abu Dhabi and she recalled that the Renewables Talk for IRENA Permanent Representatives is scheduled to take place on 28 October 2021 at the EXPO 2020 Dubai, featuring a tour of the UAE Pavilion and the Sustainability Pavilion.

188. One delegation wished Members a fruitful COP26 and success in pushing the renewable agenda in the Decade of Action and build back better post-COVID-19, and they expressed a special thanks to the UAE. One delegation recommended that the Council introduce an agenda item entitled ‘General Matters’ to streamline future meetings, as such an agenda item would effectively allow Members to present national overviews whilst simultaneously limit interventions on specific agenda item.

Agenda Item 11: Closing of the meeting

189. In his closing remarks the Director-General expressed his gratitude to the UAE as Host Country, Japan as Chair, and Zimbabwe as Vice-Chair and Facilitator of the Open-ended Group, on whom he mentioned Members depend upon for her continued work for the next Council. He thanked the participants for contributing to the lively discussion, for their willingness to share their national achievements and for their contribution to IRENA’s mission.

190. In his closing remarks, H.E. Mr Ishii Masahiro, Chair of the Council expressed his sincere gratitude to the Director-General and the Secretariat, the Vice-Chair, the host country, UAE, Council members and all delegations who have made efforts in order to ensure meaningful discussions at this Council meeting. He requested the Secretariat to proceed with the preparations for the twelfth session of the Assembly in accordance with the outcomes of the twenty-second meeting of the Council. Highlighting the need for national communities to collectively advance the energy transition and decarbonisation, he emphasised IRENA’s leading role and global Membership as increasingly critical into the future and he expressed his hope that the discussions of the Council will accelerate the efforts for energy transitions all over the world.

191. The Chair declared the twenty-second meeting of the Council closed.

Twenty-second meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 26-27 October 2021

Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Organisation of work**
 - a. Election of officials
 - b. Adoption of the agenda
 - c. Adoption of the report of the twenty-first meeting of the Council
- 3. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021**
- 4. Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023**
- 5. Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027**
- 6. Reports on Collaborative Frameworks**
- 7. Administrative and Institutional matters**
 - a. Report of the Director-General – Staff Tenure Policy
 - i. Staff Tenure Policy – General Service staff
 - ii. Staff Tenure Policy – Professional staff and above
 - b. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund
 - c. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations
 - d. Report of the Director-General – Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken
 - e. Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- 8. Arrangements for the twelfth session of the Assembly**
- 9. Arrangements for the twenty-third meeting of the Council**
- 10. Any other business**
- 11. Closing of the meeting**

Twenty-second meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 26-27 October 2021

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Programme and Strategy Committee (hereafter “PSC” or “Committee”) met on 19 October 2021. It reflected on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, including the Work Programme Self-Assessment (2020-2021) and updates on the Collaborative Frameworks, and focused discussions on the Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, and the Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in his summary below to be presented to the Council at its meeting on 26 October 2021.

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

1. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, including Work Programme Self-Assessment 2020-2021 and updates on Collaborative Frameworks

The Secretariat briefed participants on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021. Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC welcomed the progress made in the implementation of programmatic activities, in great part due to swift adaptation of the working methods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A Member of the PSC welcomed in this context the value of the hybrid format and consideration on how to leverage the format in the future.
- Some Members of the PSC underlined that the energy transition is achievable, but requires faster progress, greater investment and concerted efforts to realise climate and energy goals. Reflecting on the current increase in energy prices, one participant stressed the importance of remaining focused on the realisation of a renewables-based future.
- The PSC commended the Agency on its work on strengthening multilateralism and cooperation among Members and facilitating a greater engagement of Members in its work, particularly in the context of the Collaborative Frameworks.
- Participants looked forward to the discussions on the Medium-term Strategy (MTS) Working Team for the elaboration of the MTS 2023-2027.
- Participants noted the potential of the Collaborative Frameworks to leverage Members’ resources and extend the Agency’s reach and called for their greater integration in the Work Programme and discussions to inform the development of the MTS 2023-2027.

- Participants commended IRENA's work in supporting Members to strengthen the energy-related aspects of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and encouraged continuous work in this regard, including in project facilitation to accelerate their implementation.

2. Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023

The Director-General introduced the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023. Participants offered the following views and comments:

- Some participants noted that renewables have now become mainstream among developing and developed countries and underlined the importance of further differentiating IRENA from other organisations.
- Some participants underlined the importance of the World Energy Transitions Outlook in guiding IRENA's activities and stressed that the Regional Energy Transitions Outlooks will add value to policy debates.
- The PSC called on IRENA to be the lead convener and building on its analytical capacity, to assist Members in policy making, acquisition of financing and circumvention of bottlenecks in deploying clean energy. Participants noted that IRENA could build on Member efforts to help overcome challenges, noting the Energy Resources Governance Initiative which is focused on overcoming supply chain bottlenecks.
- Some participants noted that renewables are one of the main paths to respond to the climate challenge and encouraged IRENA to continue assisting Members in shaping their NDCs.
- The PSC commended IRENA on fostering effective partnerships and encouraged continuous and expanding cooperation with other international organisations, multilateral and bilateral banks, and the private sector.

3. Note by the Director-General on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027

The Director-General introduced the Note on the Medium-term Strategy 2023-2027. Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC took note of the first meeting of the Medium-term Strategy Working Team and encouraged the continuous engagement of Members in future discussions.
- The PSC also took note of the forthcoming report of the two co-facilitators of the Medium-term Strategy Working Team, Denmark and Kenya, at the Council.

Twenty-second meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 26-27 October 2021

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Administration and Finance Committee (hereafter “AFC” or “Committee”) met on 20 October 2021. It reviewed matters related to the Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, Staff Tenure Policy, Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund, Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations and Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in his summary below to be presented to the Council at its meeting on 26 and 27 October 2021.

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

The following comments and recommendations were made:

- 1. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021**
 - The Secretariat introduced the report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, contained in document C/22/2.
 - The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

- 2. Report of the Director-General–Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023**
 - The Director-General introduced the ‘Report of the Director-General - Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022-2023, contained in document C/22/3.
 - One participant acknowledged the efforts of the Agency in preparation of the Work Programme and Budget for next biennium, stating that it seeks zero nominal growth in the contributions to all international organisations and noted that the proposed increase in budget is due to the increase in Agency membership and utilisation of the latest United Nations scale of assessments.
 - One participant encouraged the Secretariat to provide more support and assistance to emerging market and developing countries. The participant also encouraged all Members to make timely payments of their assessed contributions.
 - One participant acknowledged the Secretariat’s sound budget management and noted that it was also committed to zero nominal growth in its contributions to international organisations. The participant however noted its appreciation of the challenges faced due to limited resources and would welcome substantive discussion on how best the Agency will manage the challenges faced of higher inflation especially the effect on staff remuneration. The participant concluded its remarks by expressing trust in the Secretariat of effective management of the Agency’s resources and reiterated that it will remain committed to support the Agency.
 - The AFC took note of the presentation and report and decided to submit the report to the Council for its consideration.

3. Report of the Director-General – Staff Tenure Policy Decision on lifting of the Tenure Policy for General Service Staff

- The Director-General introduced the ‘Report of the Director-General – Staff Tenure Policy Decision on lifting of the Tenure Policy for General Service Staff’, including an Annex on proposed changes to Staff Regulations and Staff Rules concerning the lifting of the Tenure of GS and introduction of mandatory retirement age of 65 for General Service Staff contained in document C/22/5.
- One participant thanked the Director General and the Secretariat for providing more detail on the current staff tenure policy and acknowledged the previous consensus on agreement to lift the restriction on General Service staff tenure. The participant reiterated that Professional staff and above should circulate in and out of the Agency to allow the Agency to remain innovative. The participant further noted that it was open to consider options harmonizing tenure terms between professional staff and also look at exceptional circumstances that allow the Director General to seek waivers on tenure for professional staff.
- The AFC took note of the presentation and report and decided to submit the report to the Council for its consideration.

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

- The Director-General introduced the ‘Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund’, contained in document C/22/INF/3.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

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

- The Director-General introduced the ‘Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations’, contained in document C/22/6.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

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

- The Director-General introduced the ‘Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken’ as contained in document C/22/7.
- The AFC considered the report and decided to submit it to the Council for its consideration.

7. Any other business

- One participant raised a point on protection against retaliation and suggested the Ethics office increase outreach to staff on ethics policies and functions of the Ethics Officer. The participant further requested a more detailed report at the next reporting cycle outlining strategies for outreach on ethics policies. The participant also suggested the Ethics Office to consider the need for further targeted training to increase confidence in the process, for those individuals who are required to submit disclosure of conflict of interest forms.
- The Secretariat noted that it remains committed to improving the system and that currently there are no pending cases. The Secretariat further informed that the Agency does have policies in place to allow staff to report any ethical concerns or misconduct, this being part of the Human Resources and Staff well-being strategy.

Twenty-second meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 26-27 October 2021

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