

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 5-6 November 2019

REPORT

OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF

THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY

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Report of the eighteenth meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency

1. The eighteenth meeting of the Council of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), from 5 to 6 November 2019. The meeting was attended by the 21 Council members: Antigua and Barbuda, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Kiribati, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America; as well as 10 alternates: Argentina, Bangladesh, Chad, Cyprus, El Salvador, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Philippines. In attendance were delegations of 61 other IRENA Members and 8 other countries.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

2. The Chair of the seventeenth meeting of the Council of IRENA, Luxembourg represented by Mr Guy Lentz, opened the meeting, giving a special welcome to H.E. Dr Thani Al-Zeyoudi, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the UAE. He extended his gratitude to the host country, as well as to the Director-General and the Secretariat for the continuous support provided since the last Council meeting.

3. The Council approved the arrangement for media coverage of the opening of the meeting as well as the discussion on the Annual Report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget 2018-2019.

Agenda Item 2: Organisation of work

a. Election of officials

4. **The Council elected by acclamation Luxembourg, represented by Mr Guy Lentz, as Chair, and Antigua and Barbuda, represented by H.E. Mr Conrod Hunte, as Vice-Chair of the eighteenth meeting of the Council.**

5. **On a proposal by the Chair, Egypt, represented by Mr Ahmed Lasheen, was appointed as Rapporteur of the eighteenth meeting of the Council.**

6. In his opening remarks the Chair reflected on the high representation of over 430 registrations to attend this meeting making a comparative reference to the first meeting in Madrid when the concept of IRENA was developed. He stressed that the targets set under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2050 roadmaps for the global energy transformation are key to securing a viable future of the world's children. The Chair remarked that the preservation of the planet and biodiversity is inherently linked to the preservation and protection of humankind. He noted that a critical challenge encountered with energy efficiency is the disruptive change in perception of how resources are being used, stating that only through international co-operation can such challenges be faced to accelerate renewables deployment and energy efficiency. He highlighted the second critical challenge as being the investment risks and development obstacles resulting from renewable energy having an upfront cost, thus necessitating an acceleration in the development of tools to limit financial risk. He pointed out the third challenge as being energy poverty for which renewable energy has the capacity to spread worldwide in a balanced manner. He stressed the need to consider that energy poverty can also be a consequence of the energy transition and emphasised the importance of innovation and the need for more technological advances to this end.

7. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to the Chair, Vice-Chair, Rapporteur and the host country. He announced a record participation with 126 countries being registered at this meeting of the Council reflecting a continuing of membership growth as Guinea and Honduras have finalised the process of ratification. He presented an overview of the ongoing energy transition, informing that despite the slowdown of growth last year in countries that removed subsidies, renewables are still growing with 107 GW last year. He added that while the increase in renewable capacity was initially supported by enabling policies, it is now market-driven by competitive prices, referring to Portugal and Brazil auctions of 1.5 and 2.2 cents per KW respectively. He mentioned the assistance provided by IRENA to the United Kingdom, where the last offshore wind auction cost 21% less than the previous one and highlighted that the decrease in cost of renewables was achieved also through the overall support provided by IRENA to its membership during the past years.

8. He affirmed that the transition to renewables created 700,000 jobs last year and today amounts to 11 million jobs around the world, with greater gender balance and provision of energy worldwide providing opportunities for people's wealth and wellbeing. He emphasised the importance of investment needed to match the increasing demand of energy and of lowering emissions by using the readily available instrument - renewables. The Director-General made reference to a floating solar farm in Singapore as evidence that the speed of technology deployment can support a country's efforts in achieving sustainable development, and that investing in a new renewable energy power plant is more convenient than maintaining a conventional power plant, reiterating that current cumulative investment plans in 2050 need to increase by 95 to 110 trillion USD. He advised that renewable technologies must be deployed at a larger scale with supporting infrastructure and significant improvement in efficiency. He underlined the need for flexibility and market adaptation to the new realities and urged for progress to be made in transport and heating and cooling. He added that this requires enabling frameworks to attract finance, encourage innovation and drive deployment at scale.

9. The Director-General announced that Members' inputs during the seventeenth meeting of the Council, were incorporated in the proposed Work Programme and Budget. He provided a summary of the initiatives from the UN Climate Action Summit, noting the announcement of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) package and other initiatives that the Agency joined at the Summit. He underlined that associated follow-up actions will be discussed by the Council, as Members have a responsibility to define priorities. Referring to his presentation at the ninth session of the Assembly, the Director-General emphasised the achievements and efforts to reinforce collaboration with UN entities and the private sector. He underlined that the Agency continues its efforts to find the means to provide advanced level training for staff to reinforce capacity and attract the best professionals.

10. The Director-General provided insights on IRENA's recent collaborative efforts to work with other international and regional organisations. These include the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA), the latter of which has led to the creation of a working group to avoid duplication and inefficiency. He mentioned that an agreement with the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is near completion and that the Agency is also collaborating with the African Development Bank (AfDB) on an agreement with its President to be part of the Steering Committee of the Desert-to-Power initiative. He informed that an agreement with the African Union Commission will be signed in February 2020. He reiterated the existing agreements IRENA has with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

11. The Director-General indicated that IRENA launched a campaign with UNDP that highlights renewable energy as a practical climate action solution. He affirmed that the growing political will and public support to change combined with technologies and the policy frameworks to attract investment, as well as the knowledge to inform decision-making make the difficult transformation of the global energy system possible and encouraged Members' guidance on these critical issues.

b. Adoption of the agenda (C/18/1)

12. The Chair introduced the 'Provisional Agenda' (C/18/L.1).

13. The Council considered and adopted the Agenda for its eighteenth meeting (C/18/1).

c. Report of the seventeenth meeting of the Council (C/17/SR/L.1)

14. The Chair introduced the Draft Report of the seventeenth meeting of the Council, contained in document (C/17/SR/L.1).

15. The Council considered and approved the draft report of the seventeenth meeting of the Council, contained in document C/17/SR/L.1.

Agenda Item 3: Annual Report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget 2018-2019 (C/18/2; C/18/INF/3; C/18/CRP/1; C/18/CRP/2)

16. The Chair made reference to the Report of the Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (C/18/CRP/1) and the Report of the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee (C/18/CRP/2).

17. The Director-General introduced the *'Annual Report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget 2018-2019'* which provides Members with an update of the work achieved to date and reflects the plans for the coming months as the end of the biennium approaches. He stated that the findings of the first Assessment of the Work Programme for 2018-2019 will be presented, for which feedback from the Council is important to create a foundation for the Agency's monitoring and evaluation system.

18. Mr Dolf Gielen, Director of IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC), referred to the findings of the *'Global Energy Transformation: A Roadmap to 2050 (2019 Edition)'* report launched in April 2019, where renewable power generation, electrification of end-use sectors and energy efficiency were found to be the key elements of the global energy transition. He further stated that the Agency is focused on elaborating strategies for all three key elements and proceeded to list the individual challenges, notably, the integration of high shares of variable renewable electricity, sector coupling, and the need for more work on energy efficiency. Mr Gielen indicated that IRENA continues the country dialogue on high shares of variable renewable power in support to Members. He reiterated that socio-economic analysis showed that such transition is economically positive in terms of welfare, job creation and net gain. Mr Gielen indicated that the Agency's global analysis builds on more granular assessments at the country and region level and highlighted as an example IRENA's strengthened engagement in Southeast Europe - a region of largely untapped renewable energy potential. He further explained that IRENA has assessed the significant resource potential and conducted a market assessment of renewable energy market analysis and impacts and the data on this is in the process of being finalised. Mr Gielen noted that the draft findings of a full in-depth country level regional assessment of the potentials and cost

effectiveness across all sectors as part of the Renewable Energy Roadmap (Remap) is currently a work in progress and is scheduled to be discussed on 3 December in Brussels. This initiative was supported by the European Commission through consultations with the countries. He stated that similar regional assessments are currently ongoing for other regions (Central America, Central Africa and Southeast Asia) and that such work is complemented by country level assessments. He mentioned that aside from the quantitative findings that inform policy making, IRENA continues to develop and disseminate tools such as the IRENA FlexTool, which is presently being integrated with the REmap, fostering the Agency's continued dialogue through long-term clean energy scenario campaigns for Clean Energy Ministerial and IRENA's new Long-Term Energy Scenarios (LTES) Network.

19. He highlighted the Agency's work on innovation, affirming that falling costs are accelerating the uptake of batteries and electric vehicles. Mr Gielen underlined that policy attention is shifting from affordable generation to flexibility for integration of high shares of variable renewables and noted that IRENA launched the report '[Innovation landscape for a renewable-powered future](#)' earlier this year and subsequently issued sixteen supporting innovation briefs, with fourteen more forthcoming early next year. He informed Members that two regional innovation days were organised in Uruguay and Thailand and that a third will follow in Turkey in November 2019. He further informed Members that two events on ocean technologies were held in Ireland and Canada respectively and stated that the Pentilateral Ministerial Conference on Electromobility, organised in association with the government of Luxembourg, concluded that the need for charging infrastructure and smart-charging are key elements for the rapid rollout of electric vehicles which in turn are offering new opportunities for grid integration of variable renewables. Mr Gielen noted an increased interest in green hydrogen and e-fuels, and informed that IRENA's latest findings on the economic attractiveness of green hydrogen was presented during the second Hydrogen Energy Ministerial in Tokyo in September. He drew attention to IRENA's report '[Navigating the way to a renewable future: Solutions to decarbonise shipping](#)' which was presented at the Global Maritime Forum Event in Singapore, and underlined the interest of the private sector to work closely with IRENA on finding solutions in this area.

20. Mr Gielen concluded that affordable, well-functioning, and scalable technologies are preconditions for the energy transition as technology alone is not sufficient but needs to be combined with the right market design and regulations, changing operational practices and new business models to apply solutions.

21. Ms Rabia Ferroukhi, Director of Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre (KPFC) stated that a redesign of policies is required for the increasing penetration of variable renewable energy with the growth in renewable energy capacity additions. She noted that the share of variable renewable energy reached 83% of additions in 2018 and mentioned that such trends in renewable energy are published in IRENA's annual reports with a non-renewable generation component being added this year. She stressed that, although the annual renewable energy investment reached USD 309 billion in 2018, this amount needs to be doubled on an annual basis, emphasising not only an increase in the volume of investment but a need to tap into un-utilised sources of funding such as institutional investors. To this end, IRENA is presently finalising a report on mobilising institutional capital for renewable energy. She further highlighted another important source of investment namely the public financial flows for developing countries which reached USD 18.6 billion in 2016 and an estimated USD 20 billion in 2017. Ms Ferroukhi noted that collection of data on trends and sources of investment needed to achieve renewable energy targets set by countries will be included in future editions of the annual '[Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report](#)'. IRENA is chairing the work for the upcoming edition of this report in collaboration with IEA, the UN Statistics Division, the World Bank (WB) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

22. She underlined that 135 countries mention renewable energy in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and 104 countries have included quantified targets in their NDCs mostly focusing on the power sector. Ms Ferroukhi underscored that such targets are falling short of what is needed for the energy transition and stressed the need to translate them into solid policies and measures to enable renewable energy development. She announced that IRENA's report on [*Renewable Energy Auction Status and Trends Beyond Prices*](#) is close to finalisation following the feedback received in June 2019 during the fifth IRENA Policy Day. She noted that as the power sector is the main driver of renewable energy deployment, the share of renewable energy in modern heating and transport is merely 10% and 3% respectively. However, those end uses accounted for 83% of final energy consumption in 2017 which highlights the importance of an increased focus on end-use sectors. In order to address the challenges in end-use sectors, Ms Ferroukhi noted that IRENA is collaborating once more on a policy report with the IEA and REN21 to analyse renewable energy policies in heating and cooling. She also underlined that cities must implement policies for non-electricity forms of energy, find more sustainable ways to heat and cool buildings, and develop cleaner ways to provide mobility. A project examining urban initiatives and experiences, funded by German IKI voluntary contributions is being finalised, which will allow for engagement in several activities across the Agency on policies, resource potential, district heating solutions, and work on the SolarCityEngine. She announced that IRENA launched the [*Zhangjiakou Energy Transformation Strategy 2050*](#) report this November, showing concrete actions for an energy transition at the city level.

23. Ms Ferroukhi emphasised that IRENA continues to consider the multiple benefits that renewable energy generates at the municipal, national and regional levels, announcing that the forthcoming report, *Measuring the Socio-economic Footprint of the Energy Transition: Focus on Jobs*, will feature job estimates to 2050 along with policy recommendations to address misalignments that the energy transition may bring. She informed that as a result of the emphasis on employment by policymakers, a Sustainable Energy Jobs Platform was established with key international partners to avoid duplication, improve knowledge on jobs and recommend policies to assure a just transition, and that this Platform will be launched officially at the tenth session of the Assembly. Ms Ferroukhi announced that a publication, compiled in collaboration with Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET) and the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC), entitled *Jobs in Wind: A Gender Perspective* will also be launched at the Assembly. She concluded by stating that the work conducted on statistics, policy, finance and the socio-economic impact of energy transition is reflected in the activities on the ground.

24. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Support and Partnerships (CSP), presented the Agency's partnerships and its recent work on the ground and at country level. He explained that the Regional Action Agenda continues to guide the Agency's activities worldwide with the preparatory process for the next phase of the Programme in Africa for Infrastructure Development (PIDA), to ensure a larger role of non-hydro renewables in the energy mix. He stated that the Agency's input presently focuses on the assessment of planning for variable renewables in eastern and southern Africa and that the Agency is also working with Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Secretariat to hold a ministerial meeting for the adoption of the Central Africa Renewable Energy Roadmap.

25. Mr Gonul described a scoping exercise with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) as a regional partner in South Asia. This exercise was undertaken to design a targeted regional initiative for promoting renewable energy solutions for the mountain communities of the Hindu Kush Himalayas region. This initiative also enhances the understanding of energy needs in mountain economies and strengthen the economic value chains and

opportunities offered by on and off-grid renewable energy solutions. He further affirmed that a regional action plan is under preparation and a regional consultation workshop is scheduled to take place in Nepal in November 2019. Mr Gonul highlighted that the Agency organised two regional capacity building events in Latin America, one of which was co-hosted by the government of Colombia in September, and the second of which took place in Costa Rica. He informed that the first event discussed the investment landscape for renewable energy and challenges and possible strategies to accelerate the development of projects in Latin America; and that the second event focused on the development and implementation of the carbonisation strategies for renewable energy, energy efficiency and electrification. He informed Members that a regional project facilitation technical training in Southeast Asia, took place in Brunei Darussalam and focussed on bankable solar energy project development in East Asian countries. He added that a regional capacity building event took place in Lebanon in September 2019, which provided insights on the current financial landscape and explored how innovative finance and risk mitigation solutions can attract more private investments.

26. With reference to country-level activities, Mr Gonul advised that in September 2019, the Renewable Readiness Assessment (RRA) report for Mali was launched and it identified actions to support increased penetration of non-hydro renewables in the power mix, as part of promoting decentralised renewable energy solutions to address rural electrification challenges. He emphasised the expanding site assessment work to support local authorities and prospective project developers to comprehend the technical and financial feasibility of project sites allocated for development and to date 104 solar PV and wind sites across Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been screened.

27. Mr Gonul informed Members that the UN Climate Action Summit and S.A.M.O.A Pathway discussions highlighted the recognition of the key role of IRENA and the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative in supporting SIDS in their energy transition. He announced an upcoming capacity-building workshop on the design of bankable Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) in the Pacific SIDS, to enhance the capability of local utilities and regulators to design bankable contracts for mobilising private investment for the deployment of renewable energy projects in the Pacific SIDS. He described the ongoing efforts of the Agency to promote decentralised renewable energy solutions in the provision of essential public services where IRENA is discussing with countries to carry out country-level assessments to support renewable-based electrification of rural health centres. Building on the key success factors identified in the IRENA report '[Accelerating geothermal heat adoption solutions in the agri food sector](#)', Mr Gonul announced a regional capacity building activity scheduled in 2020. He further informed that the Agency, with the support of experts from Members and Partners of the Global Geothermal Alliance, is developing a guidebook for policy-makers on options and tools to facilitate the integration of geothermal and other renewable heat sources in district heating and cooling in cities. The first set of capacity-building events on this topic will take place in Southeast Europe and East Asia.

28. Mr Gonul highlighted the Agency's efforts to foster collaborative platforms and increase its impact on the ground, and provided the example of a prospective partnership initiative aiming at enhancing dialogue and peer-to-peer exchange among the countries with high shares of renewables in the systems and facing different challenges on affordability, securing energy supply and the retention of positive cross-sectoral impacts of renewable energy deployment.

29. Mr Bruce Neese, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS) highlighted that the Agency reached 94% utilisation of the core budget in November 2019, which is in line with the prior biennium 2017-2018 when the Agency fully utilised its core budget. He further indicated that 100% of core non-assessed funding was received, as well as USD 13.2 million in voluntary contributions from ten Members and an international organisation. Mr Neese highlighted that the

Fund for Developing Countries Representatives (FDCR) did not have sufficient levels of funding to fully accommodate all delegates for the Assembly despite receiving USD 404,000 and encouraged Members to provide support in this area. He recalled that 98% of core assessed contributions were received for 2018 while only 73% of core assessed contributions were received for 2019. He informed Members that the core staffing gender parity goal is being realised as of 3 November 2019 with 51% female and 49% male. Mr Neese informed that with a view to improving staff wellbeing, the Agency requested staff members to undertake a satisfaction survey and that the results would be available on 8 November. He further explained that efforts were made to enhance the Agency's attractiveness and improve the work environment such as remote working arrangements and study leave for staff, as well as a reclassification exercise of posts.

30. Ms Elizabeth Press, Director of Planning and Programme Support (PPS) highlighted that this is the first time the self-assessment of the work programme was produced and explained that the mandate emanated from the Medium-term Strategy (MTS). She explained that during the development of the MTS, Members requested the Agency to mainstream monitoring and evaluation of programmatic activities and to continuously monitor impact and improve delivery. She further indicated a two-fold approach to the quantitative and qualitative assessment: inward-oriented to view the performance of the Work Programme, and then to examine how the Agency's products are used by Members.

31. Ms Press provided details of the assessment on the Work Programme indicating that 97% of deliverables will be completed by the end of this biennium with the 3% remaining incomplete due to difficulties in obtaining data or changing priorities of Members. She noted that a desk review of Members' websites on the use of the Agency's products revealed that parliamentary documents in 28 countries referred to IRENA's analytical findings and statistics in support of legislation and policymaking. Ms Press highlighted that the assessment showed that Members' participation and engagement in Governing Body Meetings is continuously growing. She further stated that IRENA will continue the inward-orientated assessment of its work to further improve and raise awareness of its knowledge products.

32. Ms Press stated that future work will include the introduction of more comprehensive systems to ensure the systematic collection of data, and that Members are encouraged to provide feedback on how the link between the collected data make an impact on the ground. She noted the importance of Member feedback on qualitative links of IRENA's work, and on how the systematic collection of information can be improved, as well as on other areas of statistical and qualitative information that can be collected to provide more in-depth insights. In her conclusion, Ms Press encouraged Members to provide feedback on the Assessment of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019 for future work.

33. The Chair of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), Samoa, presented the outcome of the Committee Meeting as contained in document C/18/CRP/1 (Annex 2).

34. The Chair of the Administrative and Finance Committee (AFC), the United States of America, presented the outcome of the Administrative and Finance Committee Meeting as contained in document C/18/CRP/2 (Annex 3).

35. Delegations congratulated the Director-General and the Secretariat on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019. They also expressed their appreciation to the UAE as the host country of the Agency. In the ensuing discussions, several delegations reiterated their commitment and support to IRENA while commending the inter-regional co-operation and related initiatives, and the co-operation with other international organisations and NGOs. Delegations welcomed the partnerships to boost and accelerate actions to implement the Paris Agreement, such as the NDC implementation partnerships and the Climate Investment Platform

(CIP). One delegation highlighted the positive impact of the Global Commission's report '[A New World – The Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation](#)' and the impacts of the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative.

36. Some delegations mentioned that the renewable energy sector is marred by substantial geographical, sectoral and technological imbalances which calls for adjusting the relative weight of the IRENA Medium-term Strategy pillars. One delegation remarked that the Agency should expand its work on bankability of renewables in developing countries and shift its geographical focus with proportionately more attention to those Members without access to international fora, further highlighting the urgency to tackle renewable heat, cooling and transport with sector coupling. The delegation further mentioned that there are some renewable technologies that have not reached their full potential which may be threatened by policy design for other renewables, and recommended that IRENA invite Members to fill the information gap by providing data on the domestic investor landscape in order to have a systematic monitoring of investment in projects in developing countries.

37. Members encouraged IRENA to further promote the key role of renewables in international energy-related conferences, while another delegation congratulated IRENA on becoming the global voice of renewables and source of advice and support for its Members. A delegation stressed the need for a harmonised approach to accurate data collection and reporting on biomass in sub-Saharan Africa.

38. Some concern was expressed regarding high penetration targets which could place constraints on the stability of electricity grids and their future development. The importance of electricity storage and the future of electricity generation were also highlighted as issues requiring future analysis. The Agency was invited to assist Members through capacity building activities on the margins of regional meetings to enable better utilisation of IRENA's tools.

39. It was further suggested that the issue of integration of renewable energy technologies in cities be addressed during the tenth session of the Assembly and emphasised that the Agency continue to stress the importance of innovation in technology and work for the integration of renewable energies with a smart digitalised electricity network. To this end, it was proposed that IRENA facilitates investments for affordable and accessible technological tools to harness the potential of solar, wind, biogas and other various forms of biogas energy. The Agency was called upon to strengthen international co-operation to address challenges in the hydropower sector faced in the Himalayas while formulating its future Work Programme.

40. The Director-General expressed his appreciation to Members for their inputs and valuable contribution to the work of the Agency. He congratulated them for their ambitious national targets and reiterated that project bankability, as well as the LDC and SIDS will remain a priority of the work of the Agency. The Director-General further indicated that end-use sectors must be addressed to ensure a successful energy transformation and underlined the role of private investment and the need for partnerships with the public and private sectors and indicated that this area of work will be strengthened in the next biennium. He underlined that the agenda of the tenth Assembly will provide an opportunity for Ministers to be engaged in discussions of high relevance for the energy transformation. The Director-General commended the United Kingdom as the first country to adopt a legislative act that will bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, showcasing their commitment to a sustainable energy future. He indicated his intention to support the next president of UNFCCC COP 26 in promoting renewable energy. The Director-General announced that IRENA and the World Bank are collaborating on an initiative on storage with special focus on developing countries. He assured delegations that the Sahel is a core part of the Agency's priority areas, emphasising that the African Development Bank

(AfDB) has included IRENA in the Steering Committee of the Desert-to-Power initiative. He recalled that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with UNCCD to support climate adaptation and resilience particularly in regions like the Sahel.

41. The Chair proposed that Members provide written feedback on the Assessment of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019 to the Secretariat by 15 November 2019 for inclusion in the document which will be submitted to the Assembly.

42. The Council took note, with appreciation, of the ‘Annual Report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget 2018-2019’, contained in document C/18/2, and the ‘Assessment of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019’ contained in document C/18/INF/3 and agreed to transmit them, with any necessary amendments, to the tenth Assembly for its consideration.

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 (C/18/3; C/18/Corr.1)

43. In his introduction to the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 (C/18/3), the Director-General referred to the profound shift in the global dynamics which will result in a very different world in the coming decades and highlighted that the evolution of the existing energy architecture into a low-carbon and economically vibrant system is central to the global strategy on sustainable development and climate change. He emphasised that the Agency is now an internationally-recognised actor in the global energy landscape and acts as an authoritative source of knowledge and advice with a strong convening power.

44. The Director-General also highlighted that the Agency works and exists in a dynamic space that requires high level of agility, awareness and adaptability to remain abreast of the developments in the sector, and responsive to Members’ needs. In this regard, he explained that the Medium-term Strategy 2018-2022 (MTS) has defined IRENA’s mission and roles over five years and accounts for the changing environment in which the Agency operates, and offers the opportunity to adapt the priorities in successive programmatic cycles based on dramatic changes occurred to the renewable energy sector, even in the short time since the adoption of the MTS.

45. The Director-General reported that through the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 and in line with the MTS mission to lead the global energy transition, IRENA will deploy its capabilities to sharpen its analytical and empirical work, shape the global energy discourse, and better support the development of enabling frameworks and projects to help attract investment. He also stated that IRENA will implement this new approach by being more proactive in monitoring trends, measuring progress and recognising opportunities to assist with prioritising the work where IRENA has comparative advantages and an ideal support position.

46. The Director-General affirmed that IRENA will also streamline the programmatic outputs to more impactful activities with a shift to action on the ground in an effort to serve Members more effectively and will organise work at the sub-regional level by identifying 15 operational clusters to enable more granular engagement. He emphasised that IRENA is not an implementing agency and pointed out that while the Agency does not have presence on the ground, it will continue to use its convening power to catalyse action on the ground by organising Investment Forums which will engage governments, investors, international financing institutions, multilateral development banks and agencies, pension funds, the private sector and international organisations to create a space for dynamic matchmaking to meet Member’s needs to attract investment for a pipeline of projects.

47. The Director-General highlighted that at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit, in New York, the Agency, together with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), SEforALL and UNDP announced the Climate Investment Platform, an inclusive partnership to promote accelerated, transformative and scaled-up investments. He informed that the Platform has already attracted many partners, including countries, financing institutions and multilateral and international organisations and that the Agency has already established project facilitation activities to jump-start its work.

48. At an institutional level, the Director-General proposed an adjustment of the organisational structure, including within his Office, bringing together the Deputy Director-General and the Chief of Staff to consolidate the Strategic Management and Executive Direction (SMED) Division under his Office. He also proposed that the current Country Support and Partnership (CSP) Division be dedicated to programmatic engagement and to act as the single window for Members to and from the Agency. He proposed the creation of the Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) Division, which will include all project-related functions which are currently spread across divisions, to co-ordinate related technical assistance. He emphasised that the proposed changes to the organisational structure will not have any impact on the Agency's budget and will maintain the Members' contributions at the present assessment level, while adding the new Member contributions in line with practice.

49. He noted that significant efforts to secure voluntary contributions proved successful and he thanked the contributing Members as well as Denmark and Ethiopia for their work on the Climate Action Summit. The Director-General concluded by mentioning that as a member of the NDC Partnership, the Agency has received financial commitment under the Climate Action Enhancement Package to support countries in the review of their energy-related NDCs.

50. In her presentation on the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, Ms Elizabeth Press, Director of Planning and Programme Support (PPS), reflected on the engagement in the development of the proposed work programme for the next biennium and feedback received on the Preliminary Framework for the Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 at the seventeenth meeting of the Council in June 2019.

51. Ms Press emphasised that under the pillar 'Centre of Excellence', IRENA's ability to produce reliable data and analysis will remain the backbone of the Agency's work and that in the next biennium, the Secretariat will continue to produce state-of-the-art data on renewable energy statistics, resource potentials, costs, jobs, policies, measures, patents, and standards, which are well known and trusted sources of information for Members and stakeholders. She also highlighted that IRENA's flagship analysis, including REmap, socio-economic analysis, and innovation, will draw upon knowledge generated by the Agency to make these reports even more comprehensive and informative and that data analysis will also inform the work on monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7.

52. Ms Press also stated that the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 places human resources and personnel excellence under the pillar of 'Centre of Excellence' to reflect the importance the Agency is placing on this issue with regard to the staff of the Agency as well as to the wealth of knowledge that exists with IRENA's membership. She noted that through the new approach of organising the Agency's work, collaboration will be strengthened with entities that can provide substantive input to IRENA's programmatic work, including academic and research institutions worldwide.

53. Ms Press commented on the factors that affect the global energy transformation, including the issue of high share of variable renewables, end-use sectors development and the just transition. As the voice of renewables, she emphasised that the Agency will continue to provide high-quality information on the current and future issues relating to the energy transition highlighted by Members, while ensuring that this analytical work caters for the Agency's activities at regional and sub-regional level to underpin impact on the ground.

54. Ms Press also highlighted that for the next biennium the Secretariat proposes to create engagement clusters at the regional and sub-regional levels and convene Forums tailored to the needs of each cluster, which will be open to all Members who wish to participate and share ideas, requests, and projects for consideration and discussion, and where the private sector can also share their views and requests. The outcomes of these Forums will guide IRENA's work in engaging with countries in the creation of the enabling frameworks and catalysing investment.

55. Ms Press emphasised that the Agency will continue to work on global initiatives, such as the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative, the Global Geothermal Alliance (GGA), the International Off-grid Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition (IOREC), and the Coalition for Action which remain important constituencies and stated that new partnerships and initiatives will enrich the Agency's work.

56. Ms Press highlighted that the activities on project facilitation, capacity building, and technical assistance will be shaped by the knowledge and convening activities and IRENA's existing tools, methodologies, and platforms, including Global Atlas, Sustainable Energy Marketplace, and Project Navigator. These will be effectively leveraged and adapted to support the creation and realisation of bankable projects.

57. In concluding, Ms Press emphasised that for the first time the Proposed Work Programme and Budget accounts for multi-year voluntary contributions in recognition of the fact that voluntary contributions are strengthening the work of the Agency.

58. Mr Bruce Neese, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS) emphasised that the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 is aligned with the MTS 2018-2022 and highlighted changes relating to budget tables and organisational structure. He explained that the creation of the Project Facilitation and Support (PFS) Division aims at enhancing and focusing support to projects by bringing together existing project-oriented work, such as Project Navigator, Sustainable Energy Marketplace and IRENA/ADFD Project Facility, and will be created by shifting reporting lines of existing resources under the direction of a new director (D1) post.

59. Mr Neese also stated that the Country Support and Partnerships (CSP) Division will be renamed as Country Engagement and Partnership (CEP) Division to appropriately reflect the focus on engagement and co-ordination of collaborative arrangements. In his conclusion, Mr Neese summarised that the proposed budget contains USD 65.5 million as the total core budget, including USD 44.5 million assessed contributions and USD 19.3 million of core non-assessed contributions, and USD 1.7 million core non-assessed other contributions which reflects Members' contributions remaining at the same level as the 2018-2019 budget with the addition of one new Member.

60. The Chairs of the PSC and the AFC reported on the Committee meetings held the day prior to the Council meeting, and highlighted the Committees' recommendations on the matter, contained in documents C/18/CRP/1 and C/18/CRP/2 (See Annex 2 and 3).

61. The Chair of the Council invited Mr Terseli Loial, Legal Adviser, to present the status of the proposed IRENA Scale of Contributions in terms of IRENA's Statute and financial regulations and procedures in response to requests made by Members during the AFC meeting. Mr Loial explained that the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021, including the proposed indicative Scale of Contributions as reflected in Annex 4, was a proposal of the Agency to the Council.

62. Mr Loial stated that under the IRENA Statute and Financial Regulations and Procedures, the Secretariat submits proposals on these matters for consideration by the Council. He added that in accordance with Article XII of the IRENA Statute and in conjunction with Article VI of the IRENA Financial Regulations and Procedures, the IRENA Scale of Contributions is determined by the Assembly on an annual basis, based on the United Nations Scale of Assessments adjusted to the differences in membership between the Agency and the United Nations. He also added that, in accordance with Article XII of the IRENA Statute and in conjunction with Article III of the Financial Regulations and Procedures, the Secretariat proposes the draft budget which includes a draft Scale of Contributions attached as an annex thereto for consideration by the Council which can either decide to submit it to the Assembly with a recommendation for approval or request the Secretariat to re-submit.

63. With regard to the clarification requested on the use of the previous UN Scale of Assessments for 2016-2018 instead of the current scale, a deviation from established practice, Mr Loial referred to the Chair's Summary of the Outcome of the Administration and Finance Committee meeting (C/18/CRP/2), which provides the reasons for using the 2016-2018 Scale of Assessments. He stated that the submission of a proposal that defers from past practice does not constitute an impediment if there are legitimate reasons for so doing. He further clarified that the proposal is not inconsistent with the Statute nor the financial regulations and procedures of IRENA.

64. Delegations welcomed the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 and its alignment with the Medium-term Strategy 2018-2022 and affirmed their support for the Agency's programmatic work. Some delegations raised their concerns on the use of the previous UN Scale of Assessments for contributions and requested that in the future, the Agency should calculate Member contributions based on the latest approved UN Scale of Assessments.

65. Several delegations welcomed the proposal of having the work of the Agency more focused on empowering action on the ground by using its comparative advantage to connect implementing organisations, facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration between Members and other stakeholders, and to provide policy and decision-makers with advice and guidelines regarding possible regulatory and legal framework and solutions for attractive business models. In this regard, one delegation requested the Secretariat to clarify any ambiguities in the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 that could imply IRENA becoming an implementing entity.

66. Several delegations voiced their support for regional focus as a means for more action on the ground and in-country support, and as an opportunity to exchange ideas and identify solutions across sectors, regions, and projects, and incorporate synergies and trade-offs, to ensure a just and inclusive transition at global and regional levels.

67. Delegations emphasised that IRENA's research and analysis, reliable statistics and data collection remain central to the Agency's programmatic activities, and that the knowledge products reflect and support the trustworthiness of advice and guidance of the action on the ground and the global energy transformation.

68. Delegations requested hydropower to be a focus for IRENA given its importance in the energy transformation. It was suggested that IRENA convenes a Ministerial session on hydropower at the tenth session of the Assembly in January 2020, for which the Secretariat will receive voluntary contributions from several Members to enable the participation of representatives from LDCs and SIDS. Delegations proposed that hydropower be included as a standing agenda item at future sessions of the Assembly and proposed that consideration be given to the creation of a formal IRENA Hydropower Group in the future.

69. Delegations raised several proposals highlighting the importance of including gender equality in their national energy plans and emphasised the need for additional investments to meet and exceed NDC targets where constraints exist because of limited financial resources. One delegation emphasised that there are still many obstacles to the financing of renewable energy solutions and more work should be done on access to financing and on the de-risking of projects to encourage and facilitate large investments. The work on NDCs for SIDS was also highlighted as a priority.

70. The Director-General expressed appreciation for all the feedback received, acknowledged requests and responded to specific comments. He emphasised that the Agency will not become an implementing agency by working on the ground on a regional and sub-regional basis but will continue to lead as the global knowledge platform on renewables and use this knowledge to enable action on the ground.

71. The Director-General welcomed the proposal of a thematic discussion on hydropower and informed Members that it is included in the proposed topics for the tenth session of the Assembly, and that he is looking forward to a discussion about the creation of an IRENA working group on hydropower.

72. The Director-General expressed appreciation of Samoa's invitation to host the first IRENA Investment Forum for the region and emphasised that IRENA's Investment Forums will officially start from the second half of 2020 for each region.

73. Based on the feedback made by Members and to facilitate Council deliberations on the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021, the Secretariat presented a note contained in document C/18/CRP/3, outlining clarifications and areas for revisions to document C/18/3, for consideration by the Council. In this regard, it was further clarified that the scale of contributions reflected in document C/18/3 was based on a methodology using the previous United Nations Scale of Assessments and that this constitutes a one-time occurrence which will not be considered as a precedent for future Work Programme and Budget submissions by the Agency. Document C/18/CRP/3 also clarified that, in preparing future Work Programme and Budget proposals, starting with the period 2022-2023, the calculation of the Members' contributions will be based on the latest approved UN Scale of Assessments.

74. The Director-General thanked the Chair for facilitating the work of the Council and leading the fruitful discussions resulting in an important step forward for the Agency.

75. The Council took note of the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 contained in document C/18/3 as well as the presentations made. The Council decided to submit the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 to the Assembly, on the understanding that the elements contained in C/18/CRP/3 and the inputs received from Members will be fully reflected in the final proposal transmitted to the tenth Assembly.

Agenda Item 5: Plenary discussion: IRENA's Areas of Engagement in Supporting Renewable Energy Deployment (C/18/BN/1)

76. The Director-General introduced the Agency's perspectives for supporting Members in the energy transition process with a focus on achieving their renewable energy ambitions, by highlighting the continued support to countries and regions to create conducive frameworks for renewable energy investments through tailored engagement strategies, such as the Clean Energy Corridors and the Regional Action Agendas which provide a broad framework for action and building technical knowledge and capacities and enabling environments for the deployment of renewables in many countries. He added that IRENA will increase efforts towards maximising impact on the ground while utilising its limited resources efficiently and will proactively engage with countries and sub-regions to foster tailored co-operation. He presented the proposal to organise work around operational clusters of countries through which IRENA will design and implement its activities around data collection, specific analytical work, capacity building or project facilitation with closer and continuous engagement with countries, while also involving the private sector, cross-industry stakeholders, and financial investment communities at international, regional and local levels.

77. The Director-General reiterated that the Agency has formalised strategic and results-oriented partnerships with several UN agencies and the financial community, to facilitate renewable energy investment, as Members face considerable challenges in accessing finance and making projects bankable. He added that the establishment of the Climate Investment Platform during the UN Climate Action Summit was a step forward in this direction. He emphasised that these partnerships will provide a platform for effective utilisation of IRENA's key strengths in disseminating policy, regulatory and technical knowledge, while offering opportunities for dialogue and the presentation of promising renewable energy project ideas and proposals with development and financial institutions to ensure project implementation. He affirmed that while IRENA continues to strengthen its engagement with Members to ensure more direct impact on the ground, guidance from Members will continue to be appreciated.

78. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Support and Partnerships (CSP) advised that IRENA will place considerable effort in translating its knowledge into targeted action on the ground and in relying on actual analysis, unbiased information and data generated by IRENA. He advised that working at the sub-regional level will have multiple benefits as it will enable more effective exchange within regions, promote regional co-operation and efficiencies and will assist IRENA to sustain its engagement, adapted to the needs of Members with shared interests, facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration with an emphasis given to supporting SIDS and LDCs, and thus enable investment at scale. He explained that work will be conducted in successive programmatic cycles through extensive consultations, Regional Action Agendas and Corridor initiatives and will maintain a long-term perspective in addition to step-by-step support to energy system transformation and engaging key regional stakeholders.

79. Mr Gonul announced that IRENA will convene regular Investment Forums to stimulate investment flows through matchmaking projects, consolidate engagement with Members and provide comprehensive approaches to enabling renewable energy investments on the ground. He noted that this will positively impact decision-makers and increase the ability of developers to prepare bankable project and access to finance. The Investment Forums will become a vehicle for proactive agenda-setting for renewable energy deployment as well as follow up on IRENA's technical assistance and capacity building activities at sub-regional level and will be used to disseminate knowledge products. The tailored Investment Forums will be structured around specific needs and priorities of pre-identified operational clusters of countries based on coverage of countries from particular regions, with the flexibility for clusters to be divided or combined as some countries may be placed in more than one cluster.

80. He underlined that existing high-level approvals and other forms of political commitment will continue to provide the political framework for IRENA's engagement while the practical implementation follows the cluster approach. The Investment Forums will be divided into two segments, namely Enabling Frameworks for Investment, and Project Support. Under the first segment, IRENA together with partners, will design tailored technical assistance and capacity-building activities with sub-regions, and the Project Support segment will target the facilitation of project matchmaking.

81. Mr Gonul stipulated that the goal will be to facilitate access to knowledge in order to support decision-making by public and private actors and that the Agency's partnerships with UNDP and others will help sustain follow-up, given their presence at the country level. He explained that the Climate Investment Platform offers an effective organising framework for the Investment Forum events, bringing a structured approach to assisting countries with setting targets, creating policy frameworks conducive to investment and providing access to sustainable finance and risk mitigation instruments. The methodology of the Forums will include a set of pre-forum activities such as the development of a solid project pipeline using IRENA's digital interface to collect project ideas and proposals. Country-level interactions with public and private stakeholders and exchanges with partner organisations will provide an additional channel for developing a project pipeline and identified bankable proposals are placed for consideration at the forum while those for improvement will have the option to seek project preparation support from IRENA and its partners. After the forum IRENA will continue to follow-up on projects that secured financial interest and, where feasible, support them in securing financial agreements.

82. Delegations expressed support for the formation of engagement clusters as a positive initiative but underlined that more specific information is required such as clarification on the types of synergies that could be explored at regional and sub-regional level, the defining of information exchange mechanisms and to what extent IRENA could engage more in a targeted promotion of success factors in these new regional forum events, with influential agents and regulators. Two delegations highlighted the importance of bankability and reiterated the importance of bringing stakeholders together and providing information on technologies and financing options and making policy recommendations to decision-makers. In this regard, the involvement of national implementing agencies into such activities and Forums was underlined. Members were informed about the seventh international conference on renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, which is scheduled to take place in Nicosia in November 2020.

83. The Director-General addressed points raised by Members. On the role of development banks and agencies, he explained that to eliminate duplication and fill the gap IRENA has signed agreements with development banks, in particular with the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation and is planning to sign an agreement with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the tenth Assembly. He reiterated that IRENA will not be an implementing Agency but will have a strong partnership with UNDP and will establish strong partnerships with other entities that are working on the ground where IRENA will provide its knowledge and expertise. He described the selection criteria as being through general indicators, given that countries may fit into more than one region or cluster. The Director-General welcomed Member participation in the Agency's efforts. He also stressed the need for support from the donor community for work on the ground. He advised that the organisation of the Investment Forum requires monitoring to understand their impacts on investments and alignments with Member needs.

84. The Council took note of the presentations and the discussion.

Agenda Item 6: Programmatic Discussion: Follow-up from the UN Climate Action Summit 2019

- **Session 1: Renewables and the Climate Investment Platform (C/18/BN/3);**
- **Session 2: Renewables and NDC Implementation Partnership (C/18/BN/2)**

85. The Director-General introduced the discussion by presenting an overview of IRENA's engagement at and contribution to the UN Climate Action Summit, which took place on 23 September 2019 in New York at the initiative of the UN Secretary General (UNSG). He explained that IRENA was invited to support the energy track of the Summit which was co-led by Denmark and Ethiopia, whereby participating countries developed ambitious proposals and initiatives to further accelerate the energy transition and the development of renewable energy.

86. In this context, the Director-General highlighted the work with SIDS and LDCs, which brought strong energy transition and access packages to the Summit, building on and deepening the work that the Agency is currently doing with these countries. In particular, the SIDS Energy Deliverable, developed by Palau and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), includes an objective to achieve as much as 100% renewable energy targets in the power sector by 2030, the implementation of which gives leverage to the already successful SIDS Lighthouses Initiative. The Director-General made reference to the Coalition for Sustainable Energy Access, spearheaded by Ethiopia and Morocco, which, in line with the SDG 7 on energy, aims to attain 100% access to energy in LDCs by 2030 and 100% electricity from renewable energy sources by 2050. The implementation of this initiative will build on the work of IRENA on energy access and off-grid solutions. Furthermore, the Director-General mentioned the Colombia-led initiative to set a regional renewable energy target for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), which builds on IRENA's work in target-setting in other regions.

87. The Director-General informed Members that the Agency is contributing with its knowledge and expertise to several multi-stakeholder initiatives in different critical areas of the energy transition such as energy efficiency, heating and cooling, and the decarbonisation of shipping. He highlighted specifically the CIP as an innovative partnership to accelerate transformative investment and scale up renewable energy projects, thus moving the energy transition to the next level. He noted that the Platform has already attracted many partners, including countries, financing institutions and international organisations, and that IRENA's already-established project facilitation activities will help to jump-start its work.

88. The Director-General noted that, at the UN Climate Action Summit, IRENA conveyed the message that renewable energy is the most readily-available solution to decarbonise the economy to achieve a climate-safe world. For that to happen, a six-fold acceleration in the deployment of renewables is required to advance climate action while enabling a just transition, a strong economy and greater prosperity. He relayed that the Summit was able to meet its objectives, as 77 countries committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2050, 70 countries announced that they will boost their NDCs by 2020, and a group of the world's largest donors have committed to moving to carbon neutral investment portfolios by 2050; the progress and implementation of all commitments will be tracked on the Global Climate Action portal of the UNFCCC.

89. Ms Elizabeth Press, Director of Planning and Programme Support (PPS), provided a summary of IRENA-supported initiatives at the UN Climate Action Summit, which among other things, focussed on catalysing the energy transition in end-use sectors. In that regard, she referred to the *Cool Coalition* initiated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), where IRENA has been asked to take the lead on the work stream on cities. She explained that the Coalition aims to build a platform for action and exchange of best practices for decarbonisation goals. She made

further reference to the *Storage Initiative*, a finance-based initiative with a commitment of USD 500 million by 2025 to provide energy storage solutions to developing countries, for which IRENA is working with financial and multilateral institutions to translate its extensive knowledge base into practical action on the ground.

90. On the *Getting to Zero Coalition*, which aims to decarbonise shipping by decreasing vessel emissions by 50% by 2030, at the request of the Global Maritime Forum, IRENA has provided a report on renewable energy solutions focusing on hydrogen. She further echoed the Agency's commitment to the regional initiatives for LDCs, SIDS and the LAC region. IRENA's co-operation with the Three Percent Club on energy efficiency aiming to increase energy efficiency rates by 3%, as well as the *Solar Risk Mitigation Initiative* were also highlighted. The latter initiative was done in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to advance the process of risk mitigation in solar projects, specifically in off-grid and decentralised settings.

91. Mr Gurbuz Gonul, Director of Country Support and Partnerships (CSP), further elaborated on the Climate Investment Platform as an inclusive partnership to promote accelerated, transformative and scaled-up investments to support ambitious NDCs and the pursuit of the SDGs. With an initial focus on energy transition, the Platform will facilitate integrated and streamlined support to developing countries and emerging economies, including private sector engagement while underlining the Platform's proactive and country-driven nature. The Platform will strengthen existing avenues of collaboration and consider new ways of co-operation within the partnering organisations' existing institutional structures and their respective mandates, which are expected to lower the transaction costs incurred in processing and funding projects.

92. Mr Gonul informed Members that IRENA's established project facilitation tools and activities can help jump-start the Platform's work and that, in an effort to promote the approach, IRENA intends to articulate and implement its work through several operation clusters, that will be further grouped into work streams aligned with its proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021. The proposed work streams included analysis and assessment of the national and sub-regional circumstances and potential for renewable energy deployment; elaboration of strategies and policy measures; support to countries to review and refine their energy-related NDCs; translation of strategies and plans into project pipelines; establishment of a renewable energy digital interface for receiving requests; provision of an organising framework for IRENA's proposed sub-regional Investment Forums, and monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Platform's activities through regular meetings of the partnering organisations' Principals.

93. Mr Gonul presented an indicative timeline for activities for the operation of the Platform. The four partnering organisations will initially refine the list of work streams and identify working groups. The Platform will subsequently be advertised online, and stakeholders will be invited to join and share information and data. In parallel, the structure and expected outcomes of the Investment Forums will be refined, with a view to finalising the implementation scheme before the end of 2019. He announced plans to meet with the Principals and interested Ministers on the operation of the Platform during COP25, and immediately thereafter, the work streams of the Platform and respective working groups will be operationalised.

94. Mr Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Coordinator and Director of Global Environmental Finance at UNDP, reflected on the vast potential and complementarity of the partnership between IRENA and UNDP to jointly support countries to accelerate progress on their low carbon energy transition and implement concrete steps toward their respective sustainable development goals. He referenced the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that IRENA and UNDP signed in June

2019, which enables the two entities to explore joint initiatives in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by merging IRENA's technical knowledge and convening capabilities, with UNDP's development and operational backbone at the country level where it is currently delivering, together with other partners, a portfolio of over USD 3.2 billion of financing in over 120 countries.

95. Mr Kurukulasuriya described the collaboration with IRENA as a critical partnership fully aligned with UNDP's strategic plan and underscored the importance of sustainable energy to directly address issues in other connected key sectors including water, agriculture, education and transport by empowering poverty reduction efforts, social progress, equity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. In particular, he highlighted the centrality of the energy sector in enhancing the NDC process, in line with the UNSG's efforts to spur countries to raise their ambitions and accelerate actions to tackle climate change. He added that the energy sector is fundamental in terms of its development and mitigation potential. Mr Kurukulasuriya highlighted UNDP's commitment to work closely with IRENA to that end, and through the CIP to assist countries to move along the value chain of identifying options, implementing relevant de-risking policy, and strengthening enabling frameworks to support the energy transition, including fostering partnerships required to support financial de-risking in investment.

96. Delegations expressed strong support for IRENA's activities in the framework of the UN Climate Action Summit, and in particular the enhanced engagement with the energy component of NDCs and the Climate Investment Platform. Some delegations welcomed IRENA's broadening collaborative efforts and its support for reinforced co-ordination to help countries fully exploit their potential and encouraged IRENA to continue strengthening its relationships with organisations on the ground to make sure that impacts are aligned to outputs.

97. The need to strengthen the links between NDCs and the 2030 Agenda was highlighted and the importance for IRENA to continue to support increased ambition with sound statistics on renewable energy and energy efficiency at country level was mentioned. IRENA and its CIP partners were encouraged to prioritise improving the enabling environment for private investments into renewable energy and developing bankable projects for investors. In that context, delegations highlighted the need to scale-up investment from the public sector and multilateral financial institutions to drive the global energy transition, while removing existing barriers to the flow of private capital. IRENA was invited to continue to support Members with their NDC implementation by providing country specific analysis, demand-driven policy instruments and enabling frameworks that mobilise investments.

98. In the ensuing discussions, a number of Members highlighted the crucial role of renewable energy in achieving universal energy access, while some delegations emphasised the importance of co-ordinating action and scaling-up sustainable energy investment at a regional level for NDC implementation through partnerships such as the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative. Delegations extended support to the Agency's proposal of convening regular Investment Forums at regional and sub-regional levels, while seeking clarification on the frequency of such Forums. The limited availability of technically-skilled experts in the project financing space in some countries' relevant authorities, including ministries of energy, in addition to existing language barriers, was noted as a challenge.

99. Delegations encouraged the Agency to direct its resources to scaling-up financing beyond climate investments while expanding to education, gender or agriculture, all of which represent a wider range of economic, energy and environmental benefits that could be achieved through the accelerated adoption of renewable energy.

100. The Director-General thanked Members for their support for the work of the Agency. He highlighted IRENA's commitment to continue working on mobilising investment to achieve universal energy access and to support the energy transition, including through the CIP initiative to support climate initiatives through the engagement of private sector and financing institutions. He noted the nexus with other sectors, as renewables offer not only cleaner, but increasingly more economical solutions.

101. In addressing the issue of resources required to fund the additional work on the CIP and NDCs, the Director-General welcomed the support of multiple donors and partners, as well as the UNDP and the NDC Partnership, which have both pledged resources to IRENA in that regard. He added that limitation of resources is not expected to become an issue, as a number of Members have expressed interest in extending Voluntary Contributions to the Agency. The Director-General stressed that the Agency's core budget provides much-needed financial stability, which will be complemented by increasing efforts to raise multi-year voluntary contributions.

102. On the issue of multilingualism, the Director-General advised that the Agency has started to provide translations for all its flagship publications but added that more work on this front will be prioritised in the future. He highlighted IRENA's role as the core intergovernmental Agency that leads global efforts on the energy transition and the deployment of renewables, within which framework the Agency's work on the CIP and NDCs will be implemented.

103. **The Council took note of the presentations and the discussion.**

Agenda Item 7: Administrative and Institutional matters

a. IRENA/ADFD Project Facility – Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee (C/18/4)

104. The Chair of the Advisory Committee, Mr Mike Allen of New Zealand presented the work of the Committee, referring to the close partnership between IRENA and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) supported by the UAE's commitment to distribute USD 350 million in concessional loans to renewable energy projects in developing countries based on recommendations by IRENA and an independent global, regional, and local panel of experts with multidisciplinary backgrounds. In presenting the report on the work carried out by the Committee in the seventh cycle (C/18/4), he stated that the highest number of eligible projects was received in this cycle due to the wider global recognition of the Facility, broader interest of the benefits and improved outreach through webinars and personal engagement to guide applicants. He highlighted that of the 95 applications received, 48 of them were from developing countries which was double the number compared to the previous cycle. Private sector submissions represented nearly half of applications, with solar PV proposals amounting to 59%, from which 15 projects were recommended to ADFD for funding. These ranged from utility scale solar PV with battery storage to rooftop solar PV, solar public lighting, solar/wind hybrid stems, biogas, biomass and hydropower. He mentioned that such projects requested USD 182 million in loans with USD 287 million in co-financing from governments, development funds and private sector representing a total cost of USD 469 million.

105. Mr Allen advised that ADFD will make its selection by the end of December 2019 and will announce the selected projects at the tenth session of the Assembly. He stated that in an effort to explore the evolution of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility towards continuous successful partnership initiatives and new projects on the ground whilst monitoring and reporting impacts

on existing ones, the Council may wish to consider recommending to the Assembly to extend the mandate of the current members of the Advisory Committee and Panel of Experts until the twentieth meeting of the Council, and invite interested Members to contribute to the work of the panel. Mr Allen thanked Members for the recognition of the Committee's work and expressed his eagerness to see a continuation of collective efforts and offering his continued support.

106. The Director-General highlighted the uniqueness of the partnership with ADFD, which results in projects being implemented on the ground as he witnessed on his recent visit to the Cuba solar PV project. He listed the types of projects in the pipeline and assured Members that IRENA will continue to work closely with ADFD to follow-up on the implementation and completion of projects and will report accordingly. While expressing his appreciation to the Committee members and experts of the seventh cycle and Members that engaged in the Facility, the Director-General agreed to continue the long-term collaboration, build on the partnership and examine ways to further engage with the UAE and other Members to explore opportunities to provide appropriate funding to renewable energy projects in developing countries.

107. Delegations expressed their support to Mr Allen's proposal to extend the mandate of the Advisory Committee to allow for monitoring of progress on projects.

108. The Council took note of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility – Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee, contained in document C/18/4, and decided to submit it to the Assembly.

109. The Council took note of the proposal of the Chair of the Advisory Committee and decided to recommend to the Assembly to extend the mandate of the current members of the Committee and the Panel of Experts until the twentieth meeting of the Council, and to invite interested Members to contribute to their work.

b. Report of the Director-General on IRENA Staff Tenure Policy: Human Resources Trends (C/18/5; C/18/CRP/2)

110. The Director-General introduced the report, contained in document C/18/5. He announced that a review of other international organisations' practices and policies on tenure was completed and that the report includes a description of both policy and special measures put in place by these organisations. In referring to the staff retention matter, he stated that a comprehensive summary of issues raised by departing staff during exit interviews over the course of the past 18 months was included in the report. He shared the action taken to improve the work environment for staff. He highlighted that the results of the exit interviews and staff survey have allowed for improvements for staff. Some initiatives introduced include the piloting of a remote working programme, the revision of the performance management system, the classification of posts to ensure appropriate grading and the implementation of a study and professional development policy.

111. He further stated that attracting and retaining highly qualified professionals, ensuring diversity of staff to reflect global membership and improving gender balance, including at senior level, are of the highest priority and the inability to provide professional development options due to financial constraints is a concern, as this is necessary to empower staff if the organisational culture and ability to perform are to be strengthened. He expressed his hope that the information provided, and a review of the retention issues will allow Members to make an informed decision on this issue and invited the Council to review the information including the exceptions granted on tenure in similar organisations (C/18/5 Annex 3).

112. Mr Bruce Neese, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS) recalled the decision by the seventh Assembly, whereby the Council should consider necessary amendments to the existing staff tenure policy and submit its recommendations to the tenth Assembly for its consideration. He mentioned that at the tenure discussions of the Administration and Finance Committee held prior to the seventeenth meeting of the Council, the Agency was requested to continue to provide information on exit interviews as well as more details on practices on tenure of other organisations. He added that some members voiced support for improving working conditions as a factor for improving staff retention – and highlighted that this information is now included in the report. He said that, apart from the extension of remote working arrangements and implementation of online training and study leave policies, further enhancements will be considered in collaboration with the IRENA Staff Association. With regard to specific data presented in the report, he mentioned that the average turnover rate over the past seven years is approximately 14%, and that this figure decreased in 2019 to 6%. He added that the impact of the predicted turnover from 2024 to 2026 will affect 37 staff members (see Annex 1-D of the report).

113. The Chair of the AFC, Mr Griffin Thompson of United States of America, presented the summary (C/18/CRP/2) of the Committee discussions on this item. He highlighted that the issue of clarity on the consequences and implications of the options presented was raised by the Committee. He noted that the Director-General explained how the Agency will continue to be made to review the human resources management in a holistic way and mentioned that at the request of the AFC, the Director-General submitted his preference of an additional option, included in Annex 1 of C/18/CRP/2. He stated that this additional option did not negate the Council's consideration of other options originally presented.

114. One delegation required more information on impacts, benefits and costs for the option on the General Services staff. Some delegations voiced a preference for the retention of the existing policy as it allows for the continuous evolution of the Agency and provides opportunities to engage new staff with expertise in the consistently evolving field of renewable energy. Two delegations commented that the option on discretionary extension requires more information.

115. After discussions on this matter, the Chair noted that the views of Members differ widely and that there was no consensus on the proposal submitted. He further noted that there were issues that require further analysis and consideration, emphasising the necessity for the Agency to present updated data on the recruitment and retention of staff. The Chair requested the Secretariat to present a proposal on the exclusion of General Services staff from the current tenure policy and to clarify how many staff members will be affected in each location, the financial implications including the pension scheme, and how the Agency would benefit from this option.

116. The Chair continued by noting that no consensus was reached on the proposal of exceptional authorisation for extension of tenure and that the Council should take note that there is no legal provision or restrictions contained in the rules or Statute on the re-employment of staff, and that such re-employment may prove beneficial to the organisation as those staff may return with new experience and knowledge. The Chair emphasised that the issue needs more review and consideration before a decision may be taken.

117. The Chair proposed that the Council recommends the following to the tenth Assembly for its consideration: i) that the current regime on tenure remains in place and that the Secretariat continues working on the major challenges mentioned in the report; ii) that the Secretariat provides a detailed report on the implications of the proposal to exclude the General Services staff from the existing tenure policy, which should include the number and roles of staff and the associated costs; and iii) that the Secretariat reviews the issue of staff re-employment as currently a legal void

exists. The Chair reiterated that in the interest of the Agency, the respect of people working for IRENA is one of the highest priorities. The Chair also noted that the Agency should not be at a disadvantage in recruitment and retainment compared to other organisations.

118. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on IRENA Staff Tenure Policy: Human Resources Trends contained in document C/18/5 and agreed to the recommendations of the Chair to the tenth Assembly.

c. Report of the Director-General on the Status of the Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund (C/18/INF/2; C/18/CRP/2)

119. Mr Bruce Neese, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS) presented the report on the status of the collection of assessed contributions and advances to the Working Capital Fund as of September 2019 which provides a full status of overall contributions for Members, non-Members and Members whose arrears have reached/exceeded the amount of its contributions for the two preceding years.

120. The Chair of the AFC, Mr Griffin Thompson of United States of America, informed that the AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

121. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on the Status of the Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund contained in document C/18/INF/2 and agreed to submit it to the Assembly for its consideration.

d. Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken (C/18/6; C/18/CRP/2)

122. The Director-General explained that the audit practice is carried out in an independent and objective manner in accordance with international practice, while the Internal Audit Office aims to help the Agency accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. He advised that the Internal Audit Office conducted procedures to validate the action of management to implement four internal audit recommendations relating to the general operating expenses for maintenance of information and communication technology and office equipment, as reported to the Council at its seventeenth meeting.

123. He announced that one recommendation is partially implemented with the remaining three recommendations under implementation; a follow-up of the action taken on the external audit recommendations was performed. The Director-General further mentioned that the Internal Audit Office had completed its assessment on the verification recording the right of fixed access in association with the move of the Bonn Office to new premises in October, and that the audit of payroll, dependency benefits and location grants is in progress as part of the audit plan for the Work Programme for 2018-2019.

124. The Chair of the AFC, Mr Griffin Thompson of United States of America, informed that the AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

125. The Council took note of 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/18/6.

e. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations (C/18/7; C/18/CRP/2)

126. Mr Bruce Neese, Director of Administration and Management Services (AMS) introduced the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations, contained in document C/18/7, and stated that the auditor expressed an unqualified audit opinion on the 2018 Financial Statements of IRENA with no new management letter recommendations being issued for 2018, as a follow-up on implementation of the prior audit recommendations. He also informed that the outstanding recommendation on the finalisation of the occupancy of the permanent Headquarters Agreement is fully implemented and that a supplementary agreement was signed on 9 June 2019 and presented as an annex in the report.

127. The Chair of the AFC, Mr Griffin Thompson of United States of America, informed that the AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

128. The Council took note of the Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations, contained in document C/18/7, and agreed to submit it to the Assembly for its consideration.

f. Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest (C/18/8)

129. Ms Salma Khalid, the Ethics Officer of IRENA, introduced the report, contained in document C/18/8, and informed Members on the implementation of the policy and the disclosure of interest procedures from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019. She informed that the Ethics Officer provided confidential guidance and advice to staff on questions of ethics, where two requests for outside activities were reviewed. Clarification was also provided to requests on matters ranging from the policy on ethics behaviour, code of conduct, supervisory relations and performance issues. She announced that no reports requesting protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct were received, and that there were no issues requiring consultation with the Ethics Advisory Board. She added that questions on ethics and integrity awareness were included in the staff engagement survey conducted in September 2019 to assist in fine-tuning the ethics online training course. She mentioned that twenty-eight individuals filed the disclosure of interest forms, and a review of these forms found no actual or apparent conflict of interest with the Agency. She emphasised that training activities will continue to promote an organisational culture of ethics, with the Agency's inclusion of ethics in the training plan for supervisors and staff. She highlighted that a more interactive approach is needed to engage staff in discussions, with 73% of staff having completed the online training - which is expected to have a higher staff compliance by the year end - and with the introduction of compulsory training for all new staff during their induction to the Agency. She concluded that ethical standards, values and cultures are central to the development of the Agency's human resources strategy plan and future training programmes.

130. One delegation welcomed the online ethics training program and requested a report on the Ethics officer's findings of the staff engagement survey.

131. The Council took note of the Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest contained in document C/18/8.

g. Membership of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) and of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC) - Note by the Chair of the Council (C/18/9)

132. The Council Chair introduced the item and provided background information on the process of determining the membership of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) and of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC). He outlined his proposal, contained in document C/18/9, to explore how the membership of these subsidiary organs could be adjusted, taking into account the growing membership and the evolution of issues considered by these Committees.

133. In response to the Chair's proposal, it was suggested that this matter continue to be discussed over the next Council meeting, and that the Secretariat conduct an analysis and present a report at the twentieth meeting of the Council with options for adjustments in Committee membership, including the reasons for and against any increase in membership.

134. The Chair agreed with the suggestion and invited the Secretariat to conduct an analysis on the implications of eliminating the limits or expanding the numbers of Committee members on both the AFC and the PSC.

135. The Council considered the Note by the Chair of the Council on Membership of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) and of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC), contained in document C/18/9. It requested the Secretariat to present a report at the twentieth meeting of the Council with options for adjustments in Committee membership, including the reasons for and against any increase in membership.

Agenda item 8: Arrangements for the tenth session of the Assembly (C/18/10)

136. The Director-General introduced the item. He noted that the tenth session of the Assembly will be held on 11-12 January 2020 at the St. Regis Hotel in Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, and thanked the Host Country for its continuous support. He reminded the Council that the ninth Assembly had designated Uganda as President of the tenth session, and Burkina Faso, El Salvador, Luxembourg, and Samoa as Vice-President(s). He informed that the Assembly will be preceded by a full day of high-level and stakeholder meetings on 10 January and went on to provide an update on the arrangements for the next Assembly session which, he stated, provides a timely occasion to focus on how the energy transformation can be pushed to the next level and what can be done to support Members in creating enabling frameworks to attract investment and accelerate the energy transformation.

137. His outline included a number of high-level and programmatic meetings on the day preceding the official opening, including a meeting that will be convened for Members and relevant stakeholders to exchange views on the challenges and geopolitical implications of the energy transformation, one of the topics for discussion being the role of minerals and its geopolitical implications. He mentioned that sustainable hydropower is an important component of the energy sector transformation and will also be included in the discussions. The Director-General announced that IRENA is for the first time convening a Youth Forum, which will focus on the key role of youth in the global energy transformation, and that the fifth Legislators Forum will take an in-depth look at challenges countries are facing on the road toward a sustainable energy future, placing a specific focus on the role of members of Parliament in the energy transformation of communities. He announced that on Friday, 10 January, the Public-Private Dialogue will bring

together policymakers, private sector representatives and community stakeholders to build on discussions held at the Council meeting, and that a space for cities in this context is being sought.

138. The Director-General informed that there will be several ministerial sessions on decarbonisation and green hydrogen, renewables investment in the context of national energy planning and implementation, hydropower, and a number of side events which will include representation of women in the wind industry, the impact of ocean energy projects around the world, and strengthening co-operation for the deployment of geothermal power and heating projects.

139. He relayed that the official opening of the tenth session of the Assembly will take place on Saturday, 11 January 2020, with high-level statements to be provided by the President of the Assembly and the Host Country, as well as reports from high-level and stakeholder events from the previous day. He added that the Secretariat will also present the Annual Report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019 as well as the Proposed Work Programme and Budget for the next biennium.

140. Delegations welcomed the topics for discussion at the tenth Assembly, including the role of green hydrogen and hydropower. The need for hydropower to be harnessed within a co-operative framework under the obligation of not causing harm to downstream nations in a transboundary river system was also highlighted as an important consideration. One delegation proposed a side event on the Global Commission on the Geopolitics of Energy Transformation, proposing that consideration be given to preparing an in-depth report by a regional body or commission, which the delegation is prepared to support.

141. The Council took note of the list of topics for discussion at the tenth session of the Assembly contained in (C/18/10).

Agenda item 9: Arrangements for the nineteenth meeting of the Council

142. The Council considered dates for the nineteenth meeting of the Council and agreed that the nineteenth meeting of the Council will take place on 2-3 June 2020.

143. The Council agreed on the proposed dates for its twentieth meeting to take place on 3-4 November 2020, subject to final determination at the nineteenth meeting.

144. Following a proposal made by Members, the Council considered and approved the proposed arrangements for the designation of Burkina Faso as Chair and Malaysia as Vice-Chair respectively, of its nineteenth meeting.

Agenda item 10: Any other business

145. Germany announced that the next Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue will take place on 24-25 March 2020 on the subject of a global green deal where panels will focus on hydrogen, CO2 pricing, socially just transition and offshore wind.

Agenda Item 11: Closing of the meeting

146. In closing, the Director-General expressed his appreciation for the valuable feedback which enabled a strong proposal for the Work Programme and Budget for the next biennium and other items presented to the Council. He thanked the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council for their effective steering of discussions and extended his appreciation to the students of the IRENA Student Traineeship Programme who supported the smooth conduct of the meetings. He emphasised that renewable energy takes centre stage as the world continues towards an irreversible momentum of energy transformation. He reiterated the need to ensure that socio-economic implications and targets are met with a just transition, and that IRENA will continue to build and strengthen the knowledge framework to facilitate action on the ground, strengthen co-operation with international financial and multilateral development institutions and build a closer relationship with the private sector.

147. He reiterated that renewables are the only available cost-effective instrument to reduce carbon emissions whilst meeting rising global energy demand. He acknowledged that the Members' commitment demonstrates that political will exists and that through collective efforts a sustainable energy future for all is achievable.

148. The Chair expressed his appreciation to the Director-General, the Vice Chair, the Rapporteur, Council members, delegations, the Chairs of Committees, the UAE as Host and the interpreters for their contribution to a successful Council meeting.

149. The Chair declared the eighteenth meeting of the Council closed.

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 5-6 November 2019

Provisional 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 seventeenth meeting of the Council
- 3. Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019**
- 4. Report of the Director-General - Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021**
- 5. Plenary discussion: IRENA's Areas of Engagement in Supporting Renewable Energy Deployment**
- 6. Plenary discussion: Follow-up from the UN Climate Action Summit 2019**
 - **Renewables and NDC Implementation Partnership**
 - **Renewables and the Climate Investment Platform**
- 7. Administrative and Institutional matters**
 - a. IRENA/ADFD Project Facility - Report of the Chair of the Advisory Committee
 - b. Report of the Director General on IRENA Staff Tenure Policy: Human Resources Trends
 - c. Report of the Director-General on the Status of the Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund
 - d. Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Internal Audit Office, and Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken
 - e. Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations
 - f. Report of the Ethics Officer on the Implementation of the Policy on Ethics and Conflict of Interest
 - g. Membership of the Administration and Finance Committee (AFC) and of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC) - Note by the Chair of the Council
- 8. Arrangements for the tenth session of the Assembly**
- 9. Arrangements for the nineteenth meeting of the Council**
- 10. Any other business**
- 11. Closing of the meeting**

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 5 - 6 November 2019

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Programme and Strategy Committee (hereafter “PSC” or “Committee”) met on 4 November 2019. It reflected on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget 2018-2019 and focused on discussions around the proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021. The meeting offered an opportunity for participants to provide insights and input to the Proposed Work Programme.

Outcome: A set of views and comments captured by the Chair in her summary below to be presented to the Council at its meeting on 5 and 6 November 2019.

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

Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget 2018-2019 and Assessment of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019

The Secretariat briefed participants on the progress made in the implementation of the Work Programme and the self-assessment of its biennial work. Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC welcomed the progress made over the last biennium and work done to expand the knowledge base of renewable energy and support countries and regions in their energy transitions.
- The PSC welcomed the Assessment of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019 as the first step in the implementation of the Agency’s monitoring and evaluation system. The committee commended the successful implementation of 97% of deliverables during the biennium.
- Participants noted that the Assessment has formed an empirical baseline for future evaluations and recommended that the Agency consider how to establish links between its work and realisation of national plans and projects to measure impact.
- The PSC noted that IRENA’s knowledge products, tools and methodologies are used, but this information is not always shared, so there is a need for systematic collection of such information to measure qualitative impact.
- The PSC highlighted the importance of monitoring and evaluation going forward with the new Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021 and next Medium-term Strategy to be able to prioritise impactful activities and strategically use IRENA’s comparative advantages.
- The Chair proposed, and the PSC agreed, to recommend that Members provide further input to the Secretariat in time for the Assembly.

Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2020-2021

The Director-General introduced the Proposed Work Programme for 2020-2021. He provided an overview of the strategic alignment and the Secretariat introduced the details of the proposal. Participants offered the following views and comments:

- The PSC welcomed the Proposed Work Programme and Budget and appreciated that it is based on the Medium-term Strategy 2018-2022, which provides a solid basis for the future work that will focus on enabling action on the ground, strengthening partnerships and institutional excellence. The PSC welcomed the efforts of the Director-General to adapt the Agency's work to emerging priorities, especially to catalyse impact on the ground.
- The PSC welcomed the importance placed on the Agency's trusted and transparent data and analyses, given the wide benefits of this work for the energy transitions.
- Participants encouraged wide-ranged analytical outputs and a demand-led approach which reflects the interest and needs of Members and other stakeholders, including on issues such as the global energy transformation, just transition, access and geopolitics.
- The PSC welcomed the proposal to focus on regional and sub-regional engagement and noted that more informed is required on the proposed geographical clusters. The Committee suggested to consider the regional structure already in place to ensure an effective transition to sub-regional focus.
- The PSC stressed the importance of forging partnerships with entities who can complement IRENA's strengths and are already active on the ground. The Committee encouraged strategic use of limited resources to leverage IRENA's key competencies, such as knowledge excellence, convening of stakeholders and direct engagement with Members.
- The PSC emphasised the Agency's flexibility in acknowledging the varying circumstances and objectives of Members in their respective energy transitions. Participants noted that this should be the forefront of the Agency's actions.
- The PSC welcomed the institutional alignment and noted that the new structure and objectives should avoid divisional overlap and ensure budgetary balance across the Programme.
- The Director-General invited the Participants to provide specific feedback to the Secretariat in the course of the Council meeting on issues that require further elaboration or clarification.

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 5 – 6 November 2019

Context: Pursuant to decision C/3/DC/3, the Administration and Finance Committee (hereafter “AFC” or “Committee”) met on 4 November 2019. It reviewed matters related to the Annual Report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019, Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021, IRENA Staff Tenure Policy: Human Resources Trends, Status of the Collection of Assessed Contributions, Internal Audit Recommendations and Actions Taken and Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations.

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 2018-2019
 - The Director-General introduced the ‘Annual Report of the Director-General on the Implementation of the Work Programme and Budget for 2018-2019’, contained in document C/18/2. The Secretariat provided an overview of Finance and Human Resources Sections in the Annual Report.
 - The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

2. Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021
 - The Secretariat introduced the ‘Report of the Director-General – Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021’ as contained in document C/18/3.
 - One participant expressed support of the proposed budget including adding the new Member contribution to the budget. The participant further proposed that the Agency utilize the latest United Nations Scale of Assessment.
 - One participant requested the Secretariat to submit an organigram including posts funded from all contribution sources to allow for a better understanding of how the new division will be resourced and funded.
 - One participant expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for the proposed budget and highlighted the importance of transparency of the rules applied in determining Scale of Contributions.
 - One participant requested clarification on the reasons for deviation from previous practice of using the latest United Nations Scale of Contributions.
 - The Director-General agreed to provide the requested organigram and related staffing from all funding sources. The Director-General advised that the Agency was in a period of change and the proposed scale is not a deviation but rather a practical solution to fund the Agency as the proposed budget does not adequately cover the needs of the Agency, which has a high reliance on voluntary contributions. The Director-General further suggested to postpone any changes of the Scale of Contributions to the 2022-2023 biennium discussion, at which point the position of Agency can be better assessed and a full and adequate discussion on the requirements of the Agency can be done.

- One participant requested clarity from the Chair of the AFC as to what was being requested from the Committee with regards to the proposed Scale of Assessments.
 - The AFC Chair proposed to discuss the matter with the Secretariat and provide the status of the proposed scale in terms of the IRENA Statute and Financial Regulations and Procedures, ahead of Council deliberation on the matter.
3. IRENA Staff Tenure Policy: Human Resource Trends
- One participant expressed their appreciation of the significant changes that the Agency has implemented and ways to address high turnover rates and move towards building a modern management culture. The participant mentioned that it is not clear in the report what are the consequences of any of the options presented by the Agency or how the options would be more meaningful for the Agency.
 - One participant congratulated IRENA on the significant reduction in the turnover and the inspiring and very positive results that the Agency is achieving with regard to its Human Resources Management. The participant requested clarification of Option 2 of how it will work and how different it is compared to the current policy in place.
 - One participant welcomed the introduction of the exit surveys by the Agency and the level of detail that is provided in the report and expressed that the trends do not establish a clear link between high turnover rates and the tenure policy. He stated that the tenure policy will support the Agency in obtaining a new influx of knowledge. The participant explained that the preference is to maintain the current policy but welcomed other views on ways to improve the policy. The participant also encouraged the Agency to prepare a long-term staffing plan to address the tenure impact.
 - One participant raised the question relevant to the last option and queried whether a decision needs to be made at this time.
 - One participant expressed appreciation of the details included in the report and the options presented and proposed moving the discussion towards considering a decision. The participant also noted that a number of organisations do not apply the tenure policy on administrative staff and that perhaps a mix of the options presented could be considered by the Council.
 - The Director of AMS explained that Option 2 would be the preferred option as it allows the Director-General to have some discretion to extend staff for a longer period when circumstances arise and added that the IAEA has set specific conditions on how to apply the exception and stated that Option 3 provides for the exclusion of General Services staff from the tenure policy as is provided by OPCW, IAEA and OSCE.
 - The Director-General expressed his appreciation of the Members' support and engagement and explained that efforts will continue to be made to review the human resources management of the Agency in a holistic way and put-forward an option to address the tenure issue. He also welcomed the suggestion to present his preferred recommendation which should be consistent with what is offered in other organisations. He concluded that the Agency will continue to monitor its Human Resources trends and suggest additional changes that might be required in the future.
 - The AFC Chair requested the Secretariat to propose the Director-General's preferred option that could be a combination of the other proposals but should be on the basis of equity - no better no worse than in other organisations (Annex I). The additional proposal by the Director-General does not negate the Council's consideration of the other options that were presented in the report of the Director-General.

4. Status of Collection of Assessed Contributions

- The Secretariat introduced the 'Report of the Director-General on the Status of the Collection of Assessed Contributions and Advances to the Working Capital Fund' as contained in document C/18/INF/2
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

5. 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/18/6.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

6. Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations

- The Secretariat introduced the 'Report of the Director-General on the Status of Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations' as contained in document C/18/7.
- The AFC took note of the report and decided to submit it to the Council.

Annex I

The Director General submits the following proposal as being consistent with the authorities granted to the executive head of other international organizations having a staff tenure policy in place and appropriate for IRENA.

(1) Exclude General Service staff from the scope of the tenure policy, which will allow the Director-General to grant them contract extensions or renewals which would result in a total length of service in excess of the tenure limit set forth in Staff Regulation 5.4 (b) and (c) based on the continued need for their services, the availability of funding and the interest of the Agency, and provided that there is a documented record that they have fully and satisfactorily performed their functions and met the required standard of conduct. Such exclusion is provided for at the CTBTO, IAEA and OPCW.

(2) Authorize the Director General to grant contract extensions or renewals to staff at the professional level and above which would result in a total length of service in excess of the tenure limit set forth in Staff Regulation 5.4 (b) and (c). This authority shall be used solely in those cases where the incumbent who is reaching the maximum length of service is either responsible for the completion of a work programme/project which will continue beyond his/her tenure limit and requires his/her specialized knowledge or for other compelling reasons in the interest of the Agency. Similar exceptions are in place at the CTBTO, IAEA and OECD.

(3) Authorize the Director-General to rehire former staff members at the professional level and above who have reached the maximum length of service set forth in Staff Regulation 5.4 (b) and (c) after they have separated from and have not been employed in any capacity by the Agency for at least a period of one year. The length of service of a rehired staff member after a break in service of at least one year will begin anew. Similar provisions are in place at the CTBTO and the IAEA.

Should this proposal be recommended to the Assembly for its consideration, the Council may wish to also recommend that the Assembly request the Secretariat to prepare any necessary amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules for consideration by the Council at its 20th meeting.

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
 Abu Dhabi, 5 - 6 November 2019

Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021

Note by the Secretariat

This note is provided to facilitate the Council deliberations on the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 contained in document C/18/3. In the course of the Council discussions and following the recommendations of the Programme and Strategy Committee (PSC) and the Administrative and Finance Committee (AFC), several suggestions and requests for adjustments to the current draft were made. To enable the finalisation of the document for transmission to the Assembly, the Council requested the Secretariat to outline the changes that will be made to ensure a shared understanding and completeness of information.

Pursuant to this request, it is proposed that the below adjustments be made to the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021, before its transmission to the Assembly. It should be noted that all comments made by Members in the course of the discussions will be taken into account in the implementation of the Work Programme, and that the clarifications below include only those areas where there may have been ambiguity in language or insufficient clarity. This note also includes clarification on the Proposed IRENA Scale of Contributions as read out by Chair of the Council.

Overall clarifications

- Provide additional emphasis on the importance of knowledge products;
- Clarify that there are multiple energy transitions, driven by national, regional and other priorities;
- Add emphases to the global nature of IRENA's work that is of importance to both developing and developed countries;
- Include more explicit reference to the work on universal access;
- Include a reference to the facilitation of collaborative groups and peer-to-peer exchange among Members on topics of common interests, such as hydropower.

Specific language adjustments

- Paragraph 16: exclude the ambiguity on the role of IRENA in project feasibility and technical assistance to distinguish it from an implementing agency. The text should underline that the Agency will not undertake implementation activities.
- Paragraph 46: clarify that the referenced prioritisation of the work on NDCs is concerning SIDS only.

Scale of Contributions

The Scale of Contributions as contained in the Proposed Work Programme and Budget 2020-2021 which is based on a methodology using the previous UN Scale of Assessments is a one-time occurrence and will not be considered as a precedent for future IRENA Work Programme and Budget submissions. Starting from the Work Programme and Budget 2022-2023, the calculation of the Members' contributions will be based on the latest approved UN Scale of Assessments.

Eighteenth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 5-6 November 2019

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