

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

Twenty-fifth Session

REPORT OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION

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**REPORT OF THE
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ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION**

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance met at the Palais des Nations in Geneva for its Twenty-fifth Session on 31 October 2019. The Session was chaired by Mr Z.K. Korcho (Ethiopia). Two meetings were held.

2. The following Member States were represented:¹

Afghanistan	Denmark	Kenya	Republic of Korea
Albania	Djibouti	Lao People's	Republic of
Algeria	Dominican Republic	Democratic Republic	Moldova
Angola	Ecuador	Latvia	Romania
Argentina	Egypt	Lithuania	Senegal
Australia	El Salvador	Luxembourg	Serbia
Austria	Estonia	Madagascar	Sierra Leone
Azerbaijan	Eswatini	Malawi	Slovakia
Bahamas	Ethiopia	Maldives	Slovenia
Bangladesh	Finland	Mali	South Africa
Belarus	France	Malta	South Sudan
Belgium	Gambia	Mauritius	Spain
Botswana	Georgia	Mexico	Sri Lanka
Brazil	Germany	Mongolia	Sudan
Bulgaria	Ghana	Montenegro	Sweden
Cameroon	Greece	Morocco	Switzerland
Canada	Guatemala	Mozambique	Timor-Leste
Chad	Guyana	Myanmar	Togo
Chile	Haiti	Namibia	Trinidad and Tobago
China	Holy See	Nepal	Tunisia
Colombia	Honduras	Netherlands	Turkey
Congo	Hungary	Nicaragua	Uganda
Costa Rica	India	Niger	Ukraine
Côte d'Ivoire	Iran (Islamic	Norway	United Kingdom
Croatia	Republic of)	Pakistan	United States of
Cuba	Ireland	Panama	America
Cyprus	Israel	Peru	Uruguay
Czechia	Italy	Philippines	Viet Nam
Democratic Republic	Japan	Poland	Yemen
of the Congo	Jordan	Portugal	Zimbabwe

3. The Member States agreed to a request made by the Permanent Representatives of the Delegation of the European Union and of Finland, on behalf of the European Union rotating presidency, that a representative of the European Union participate as an expert in the consideration of the relevant items of the provisional agenda (S/25/1).

¹ The list of participants is contained in document S/25/15. Unless otherwise indicated, all documents and slide presentations are available on the Standing Committee section of the IOM website.

I. Adoption of the agenda

4. The provisional agenda contained in document S/25/1 was adopted by the Standing Committee and subsequently issued as document S/25/16.

II. Statement by the Director General

5. The Director General, welcoming participants to the Standing Committee's Twenty-fifth Session, delivered the statement contained in extenso in document S/25/13, highlighting the Organization's activities in response to current migration and humanitarian challenges and giving a brief overview of the agenda items to be discussed during the Session. An update on the application of the Internal Governance Framework (IGF) was provided in document S/25/INF/1.

6. He condemned the attack in South Sudan on 27 October 2019 that had left three IOM aid workers dead, while a fourth and the young son of one of those killed had been abducted and were still missing. Two other aid workers had been wounded. He reiterated that humanitarians and civilians should never be subjected to such heinous acts of violence.

7. Member States offered their deepest condolences to the Organization and to the families of the victims and expressed the hope that those abducted would be released unharmed. The situation underscored the perils faced by humanitarian workers in the field and the need to ensure their safety and security.

8. One representative, welcoming the Director General's work to strengthen the Organization's core structure, expressed the view that there was no inherent contradiction between such efforts and preserving the essentially field-based nature of the Organization. Strategic and financial change would be needed to guarantee the availability of predictable, flexible, needs-based funding. Another representative requested the Administration to provide a road map giving timelines and targets for internal governance reform, including an overview of specific funding gaps. The initial results of the reform process were encouraging: in particular, the increase in reports submitted through the internal justice system demonstrated greater awareness of misconduct and how it could be reported. Appropriate follow-up would be vital. Specific briefings on integrity should also be provided. A third representative, echoing that request, welcomed the focus on reforms to the United Nations development system as a whole and the growing momentum to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

9. With regard to the projected increase in Operational Support Income (OSI) in 2020, two representatives noted that it would be insufficient to cover critical institutional needs, one adding that the Council should consider additional drawdowns from the OSI reserve rather than increasing the reserve further. Both emphasized the importance of unearmarked and flexible contributions and encouraged Member States to consider making such contributions so that the Organization's institutional needs could be met. The Administration was requested to provide a detailed update on the activities of the Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MIRAC) to the next meeting of the Council.

10. Responding to the points raised, the Director General said that, while unearmarked and flexible contributions undoubtedly helped to finance the needs of the Organization, in the longer term Member States would need to consider the Organization's overall funding model. The Administration strove for transparency in its allocation of unearmarked resources with a view to ensuring credibility and encouraging further flexible contributions.

11. Clear timelines for reform were easier to give in some cases – such as upgrading technology systems – than others. In certain areas, sustainable funding must be secured in advance so that reform could proceed in a holistic manner, rather than piecemeal. With regard to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, the Administration's key concern was to raise awareness, train staff and prevent misconduct. Consideration could be given to how Member States might be kept abreast of developments in misconduct investigations, provided that due process was observed.

III. Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2019

12. The Standing Committee had before it a document entitled Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2019 (C/110/9) for consideration in conjunction with the Programme and Budget for 2019 (C/109/6/Rev.1) and the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2019 (S/24/6).

13. The Administration reported that the Administrative Part of the Budget remained unchanged at CHF 52,240,024, as approved in document S/24/6. The level of OSI was maintained at USD 101.4 million, which included a drawdown of USD 5.4 million from the OSI reserve.

14. The Operational Part of the Budget had increased from USD 1,660 million to USD 2,045 million owing to additional funding received for ongoing projects and new activities initiated since the approval of the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2019. There had been significantly higher levels of project activity for services provided under the Movement, Emergency and Post-crisis Migration Management, Migration Health, Regulating Migration and Facilitating Migration budget lines. The Administration emphasized that IOM activities often took place in high-risk and dangerous places and required exceptional implementation measures in order to safeguard the resources and assets of the Organization. Budgeted resources for Migration and Development activities had decreased by USD 83.28 million, owing mainly to revised accounting treatment for infrastructure projects undertaken in Peru. The geographical breakdown of the Operational Part of the Budget showed increases across all regions for services and activities, demonstrating the scope of services and degree of engagement with governments around the world.

15. One representative commended the efforts of IOM in the health sector and noted the comprehensive approach taken to humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons, which had contributed to social cohesion and should be extended in future years. Cash-based interventions were an efficient means of protecting human dignity and their use should be extended and reviewed to meet the needs of the target population.

16. The Standing Committee recommended that the Council take note of the Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2019 (C/110/9).

IV. Status report on outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget and Member State voting rights

17. The Administration introduced the document entitled Status report on outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget and Member State voting rights (as at 30 September 2019) (C/110/5/Rev.2). The update reflected the additional contributions received since the Twenty-fourth Session of the Standing Committee, although the amount of outstanding contributions was still greater than the figure presented at the same time the previous year. As at 30 September 2019, 20 Member States had been subject to Article 4, of which 8 had lost their voting rights. Since document C/110/5/Rev.2 had been issued, payments towards assessed contributions for

2019 had been received from Cabo Verde and Chile, and a significant payment had been received from the Congo, meaning it was no longer subject to Article 4.

18. The Standing Committee took note of the contents of document C/110/5/Rev.2 and recommended that the Council endorse them; it also urged Member States whose contributions were in arrears to pay their contributions in full or, in consultation with the Administration, to agree to a payment plan and fully respect the payment conditions.

V. Programme and Budget for 2020

19. The Administration highlighted the key points set out in the document entitled Programme and Budget for 2020 (C/110/8 and Corr.1). The Administrative Part of the Budget amounted to CHF 52,242,614, which reflected an increase of CHF 2,590 over the 2019 revised budget to include the full assessed contribution of Uzbekistan. The Operational Part of the Budget was based on anticipated funding and was estimated at USD 858.3 million, which was 15 per cent lower than the 2019 budget of USD 1,011.7 million projected at the same time the previous year. The projected level of OSI – USD 123 million – had been calculated based on the previous year's results and current and expected trends. As an exceptional measure, 14 staff positions had been moved from the Administrative Part of the Budget to the Operational Part for 2020, as a reduction in the post adjustment for Geneva in 2018 had subsequently been overturned following an appeal by the staff associations of various Geneva-based international organizations.

20. One delegate emphasized that attention should be devoted to irregular migration to his country. Sufficient funding should be made available to protect the migrants concerned, and durable, efficient solutions should be sought through coordination among the countries involved. He also highlighted the challenges of sending remittances to countries affected by conflict or natural disasters.

21. Another delegate welcomed the effort to make OSI projections more realistic, which would enable the Organization to reinvest overhead income into its operations more rapidly. The risks involved were acceptable. It was disappointing to note that only two new positions in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) had been funded through the core budget when the IGF target was five; moreover, the External Auditor's recommendation to increase the staffing of the Office of the Ombudsperson did not appear to have been followed. Using MIRAC funding was not a reliable solution for key oversight functions. Given the challenges faced in recruiting and retaining OIG staff, consideration should be given to upgrading investigator positions.

22. A third delegate said that basing budget proposals on confirmed, rather than predicted, funding gave an unrealistic impression of the extent of the Organization's services and undermined the legitimacy of the budget as the key tool to guide Member States in steering the Organization. While successful efforts had been made to shift focus and resources within the zero nominal growth framework by which the Administrative Part of the Budget was bound, the fact that the Administrative Part was below 3 per cent of consolidated revenue levels indicated that it should be strengthened. Greater fiscal discipline and streamlined budgeting procedures were needed. The progress made in redressing the Organization's gender imbalance was encouraging and should be consolidated.

23. The Deputy Director General, responding to comments, said that some progress had been made in reducing the cost of remittances; work would continue with a view to ensuring that their value could be maximized. While projecting an increased level of OSI entailed a certain degree of risk, it was unlikely that problems would be encountered unless demand for the Organization's services fell significantly. So far, the increase had helped to meet various important needs. Efforts would continue through the IGF to identify core positions and determine how best to fund them. Further discussions

would be held within the Working Group on Budget Reform. Predictable unearmarked contributions helped to ensure the sustainability of funding for core needs, which could not be covered by assessed contributions alone. Although only two new OIG positions were included in the core structure for 2020, funding had also been allocated more broadly with the aim of preventing and tackling misconduct and human error. For example, six governance-related posts had been created in other departments to ensure a comprehensive approach. The limitations of the former internal justice system could only be addressed by tackling the root causes of problems. Upgrading posts, not only at Headquarters but in particular in the field, would make the Organization a more competitive recruiter and would be considered in the context of the IGF. Gender equality remained a priority; it was hoped that initiatives such as the Pathways Pool would improve the gender balance across the Organization.

24. The Director General added that despite an increased level of projected OSI, two key structural problems remained. First, certain elements of the Organization's core structure, such as Chiefs of Mission and Resource Management Officers, were funded directly from projects, sometimes raising questions from donor countries. Given the Organization's decentralized structure and the projectized nature of its work, it was impossible to guarantee that all core costs would be covered. Second, there had been some pressure to reduce the overhead rate applied to projects, the revenue from which was the main source of OSI, from the current 7 per cent. As that rate had been agreed by the Council, Member States should advocate for it to be respected, for instance when other organizations of which they were members engaged with IOM.

25. The Standing Committee took note of the Programme and Budget for 2020, as set out in document C/110/8 and Corr.1, and recommended that the Council approve CHF 52,242,614 for the Administrative Part of the Budget and USD 858.3 million for the Operational Part of the Budget.

VI. Progress report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations

26. The Administration introduced the document entitled Report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations (S/25/6), beginning by outlining the three types of audit – certification, performance and compliance – undertaken by the External Auditor. A three-year extension of the mandate of the Auditor-General of Ghana, appointed as External Auditor in 2016, had been approved by Member States with effect from 2019. The number of outstanding recommendations had decreased from 52 in 2017 to 41 in 2018. A significant number of those outstanding related to certification and performance audits, and as such were strategic recommendations that required time and resources to implement. A number of recommendations would be considered in the context of the application of the IGF. Several were already being addressed: they related in particular to the procurement transformation process, the alignment of information and communications technology strategy with the IOM Strategic Vision, and negotiations on the Organization's privileges and immunities with the authorities of various countries.

27. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/6.

VII. Update on risk management

28. The Administration, in presenting the document entitled Risk management update (S/25/9), said that, since 2014, IOM had dedicated additional resources and provided strong leadership support to establish a more integrated risk management approach that enabled managers and staff to anticipate potential events, learn from past experiences and adequately balance risk and opportunity in pursuing the Organization's mandate, strategic vision and objectives. The new set of risk management objectives, which had been integrated into the IGF, aimed to establish a pragmatic,

dynamic and integrated approach to identifying and managing risks across the Organization. Such an approach was clearly linked to achieving the Organization's strategic objectives and contributed to enhancing transparency, accountability and performance. Key achievements in 2019 in the area of risk management included introducing a multilayered and dynamic approach to how risk was assessed and managed, updating risk categories and the risk reporting process, and enhancing risk management responsibilities. The aim for 2020 was to continue to implement the new approach through revised training packages, real-time risk reporting and continued collaboration with the risk management task force of the United Nations system High-Level Committee on Management.

29. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/9.

VIII. Update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building

30. The Administration, introducing document S/25/11 (Plans for the IOM Headquarters building: Update 2), explained that, since the document had been published, a recruitment agency had been engaged to headhunt a suitable candidate for the post of Project Director, following the withdrawal of the previous candidate at an advanced stage of the recruitment process. It was hoped that someone could be identified by the end of 2019 and an early start date negotiated to minimize the impact on the loan application process. The Administration would work closely with the project consultant to that end. In order to determine staff needs and translate them into project requirements, two workshops would be held in November 2019 to consult staff and senior managers on occupancy models for the new building.

31. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/11.

IX. Report on the IOM Development Fund

32. The Administration, introducing document S/25/12 (IOM Development Fund – Status report: 1 January to 30 September 2019), noted that over USD 16 million had been made available in 2019 to support developing Member States. It thanked the Government of the United States of America for its voluntary contributions since the Fund's inception and welcomed additional earmarked contributions of USD 39,600 from the Government of Austria, USD 578,704 from the Government of Belgium and USD 345,938 from the Government of the United States of America. The Administration was also grateful to the Government of Sweden for its recent contribution of USD 538,851 and to the Government of Japan for covering 50 per cent of the costs of a part-time Junior Professional Officer position for another year.

33. Seventy-eight per cent of the overall funding available for projects had been allocated by 30 September 2019 and a final review of pending prioritized applications was almost complete. The Administration noted the quality and diversity of projects in 2019, highlighting in particular the successful Diaspora Youth Volunteer Programme in Madagascar. Regarding active projects, 131 were currently at various stages of implementation and were monitored regularly by the Fund. The report of an evaluation of the Fund carried out by the OIG in 2019 was available on the Fund's website or directly from the Organization; it included a list of recommendations accepted by the Administration to take effect from January 2020.

34. One Member State, expressing support for the proposal set out in document S/25/12 to raise the ceiling for Line 2 project funding, said that the Fund could serve as an important tool to support Member States in transition as they developed their migration management systems and capacities.

Future evaluations should focus on project impact to learn how to maximize the sustainability of migration management projects.

35. A representative of one regional group expressed appreciation to those who donated to the Fund, which had made a significant contribution to addressing various aspects of migration in his region. The group would be urging its members eligible for assistance to submit project proposals.

36. The representative of Madagascar welcomed the success of the Diaspora Youth Volunteer Programme, which sought to bring young people from the diaspora in developed countries to Madagascar to help people in rural towns in their work and daily lives. She hoped that the Programme would be replicated elsewhere.

37. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/12 and recommended that the Council approve the proposed increase in budget ceilings for projects under Line 2 to USD 300,000 for national projects and USD 400,000 for regional projects by amending paragraphs 17(b) and (c) of Standing Committee Resolution No. 18 of 27 June 2018 accordingly.

X. Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership

(a) How IOM can assist States in implementing migrant protection and assistance measures

38. The document entitled How IOM can assist States in implementing migrant protection and assistance measures (S/25/4) was introduced by the Administration in a slide presentation.

39. Based on decades of experience, IOM had developed a number of practical resources to support Member States in meeting their commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including handbooks, guidance notes, and standardized procedures and screening forms, which were up to date and available to all. Member States could also request the Organization's guidance on response planning and the development both of referral mechanisms and of programmes to prevent exploitation and abuse. The purpose of all IOM guidance was to provide the resources required to plan and implement protection and assistance measures. Member States, in turn, could support the Organization's work by developing their own long-term programmes and by providing financial support to one of two global mechanisms managed by IOM Headquarters: the Global Assistance Fund, which assisted migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse, and the Humanitarian Assistance for Stranded Migrants fund. Both were flexible, purely operational rapid response programmes.

40. Representatives of one Member State and one regional group commended the Organization's efforts and leadership in protecting vulnerable migrants, including through joint initiatives and technical guidance to support compliance with international commitments. For the Organization to be successful in its work, it must collaborate with a range of national and international organizations working in the humanitarian and development sectors. Multi-stakeholder collaboration and social initiatives aimed at meeting migrants' needs should also be promoted and supported. The representative of one Member State drew attention to the double vulnerability of migrants in detention abroad, who, in addition to being deprived of liberty, were separated from their loved ones by distance. One representative emphasized the need to speed up migrant needs assessments and create efficient channels of communication between governments on migration-related issues. Another speaker objected to target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda, which encouraged language and formulations that her country found ambiguous and potentially problematic. She also stressed that the Global Compact was voluntary and had not been signed by all Member States.

41. The Administration, responding to a request for clarification as to how the Organization's work fitted within the overall humanitarian and development architecture, said that IOM was part of the Global Protection Cluster Task Team on Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Action. The aim of the Task Team was to develop guidance for humanitarian actors on how to mainstream anti-trafficking initiatives into humanitarian response. The IOM Global Assistance Fund could be drawn on for protection and assistance in a range of humanitarian contexts as using an established global fund was sometimes more efficient and provided a quicker response time compared with setting up mechanisms locally.

(b) Skills-based migration and partnerships: elements and essential prerequisites

42. The Administration, introducing the document entitled Skills-based migration and partnerships: elements and essential prerequisites (S/25/5) in a slide presentation, outlined the definition of skills-based migration and the purpose of developing a policy approach that would be beneficial for all stakeholders: skills mobility partnerships. The prerequisites for such partnerships were long- and mid-term policy planning; multi-stakeholder approaches and policy coherence; data for establishing sustainable systems and schemes; local development and job creation; skills classification and recognition; addressing the social aspects of employment and mobility; the integration of migration aspects; and reducing and sharing training costs. Global frameworks served as platforms and set goals for skills mobility partnerships, such as the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

43. One delegate recognized the need for better integration of migration considerations into development assistance programmes within both donor and developing countries. He suggested that, where there were labour market shortages in a certain field, a bilateral agreement with another State could help to meet demand for particular skills.

44. The representative of one regional group, emphasizing the importance of legal migration as part of a balanced and comprehensive migration and human mobility policy, said that skills mobility and skills partnerships with third countries assisted in improving prospects for young people in regions of origin and, by presenting a legal alternative, prevented irregular migration. Skills partnerships could also provide a long-term perspective on how best to integrate migrants into labour markets and society in receiving States, while fully respecting national competences. He emphasized the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, policy coherence and long- and mid-term planning, as outlined by the Administration. The recent launch of the "Migration of African Talents through Capacity building and Hiring" project exemplified the Organization's unique position in the area of skills-based migration.

45. With education viewed as a priority for global development, one delegate outlined her country's experience of skills-based migration in relation to the education sector and the recognition of previously obtained qualifications. Positive experiences included the launch of a programme to enhance scientific and technological knowledge within her country by forging ties with scientists, technology experts and researchers living abroad and developing repatriation and reintegration initiatives for those wishing to return to work in the country.

46. Another representative remarked upon the importance of pre-migration arrangements, including capacity-building for migrants, in order to facilitate migration and integration into countries of destination and ensure positive outcomes. Legal frameworks, including trade agreements, bilateral agreements and public-private partnerships, could facilitate regular migration. Given the importance of inclusiveness, it would be beneficial to listen to the voices of migrants and give them an influential role in the development of policies and strategies. Efforts should be made to tackle the challenges to

regular migration faced by skilled migrants by establishing legal frameworks to facilitate regular migration pathways and government partnerships with the private sector and to protect such migrants from abuse.

47. The Standing Committee took note of documents S/25/4 and S/25/5 and the comments made by Member States.

XI. Overview of the Organization's strategy on migration and sustainable development

48. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Summary of the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development 2019–2023 (S/25/3). The Organization had been conscious of the important links between migration and sustainable development since its creation, but IOM's participation in the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the reform of the United Nations development system and the inclusion of migration in the 2030 Agenda presented a momentous opportunity for IOM to build and capitalize on its important development footprint as a global organization. Migration cut across all development sectors and the Strategy acknowledged that migration, when well managed, could be both a development strategy and a development outcome. The three cross-cutting issues of climate change, inequality and gender framed the Strategy, which was structured around three outcomes with associated deliverables. The Strategy provided a framework for IOM to engage with its United Nations partners, bilateral cooperation agencies and international financing institutions to integrate migration into development planning. The Strategy hinged on increased multisectoral collaboration within IOM to secure better programming and would help the Organization to locate new sources of funding and scale up its work by linking its mandate to the broader development agenda. The Strategy would reinforce, not detract from, the Organization's operational nature and build directly on the IOM Strategic Vision.

49. Representatives praised the Strategy as an important milestone and thanked the Administration for the consultative drafting process. Its three-pillar structure reflecting the IOM Strategic Vision and its focus on strengthening capacities and partnerships were both welcome. Two speakers requested more information about how the Strategy would be implemented and embedded throughout the Organization. Another said that more should be done to promote the narrative of migrants as contributors to development.

50. A representative of one regional group said that efforts should be focused on addressing the drivers of forced migration, supporting Member States to integrate the migration-related Sustainable Development Goals into their national plans and building Member State capacities. The Strategy's deliverables should be further refined into specific, measurable outcomes. A clear view was needed of the Strategy's financial implications and whether it would be possible to tap into resources allocated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

51. The Administration said that an implementation plan for the Strategy was being developed and that financial resources had been allocated to support the roll-out of the Strategy, including measures to ensure staff capacity development. The plan would also address how to strengthen programming and scale up the Organization's work. The 2030 Agenda provided indicators that would be used to report back to Member States on progress made. All achievements would be directly linked to the IOM Strategic Vision.

52. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/3 and of the comments made by Member States.

XII. Report on the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States

53. The Legal Counsel introduced the document entitled Sixth annual report of the Director General on improvements in the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States (S/25/7), which covered the period from 1 October 2018 to 31 August 2019. During that time, agreements on privileges and immunities had been signed with three countries, bringing the total number of Member States, observer States and other places where the Organization had been granted full privileges and immunities that met the criteria contained in Council Resolution No. 1266 of 26 November 2013 to 97. Such privileges and immunities were essential to the smooth functioning of the Organization. While encouraging the signing of further bilateral agreements, he outlined three possible approaches to developing a multilateral agreement consistent with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (1947). The first was to develop a standard bilateral template agreed by the Council and used for all States without deviation; the second was to develop a multilateral instrument to be ratified by States and to replace any existing bilateral agreements; the third was to insert a provision into the Constitution stipulating that States must grant IOM privileges and immunities substantially similar to those in the 1947 Convention.

54. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/7 and recommended that the Council remain seized of the matter and reiterate its call to all Member States to grant the Organization privileges and immunities substantially similar to those of the United Nations specialized agencies.

XIII. Amendments to the Staff Regulations

55. The Administration, introducing the document entitled Amendments to the Staff Regulations (C/110/7), outlined the proposed amendments as detailed in Annex I to the document. The amendments would update the Scope and Purpose and Staff Regulation 4.1 to include all three staff categories and would amend the general working conditions under Staff Regulation 5.1 to rectify the disparity of treatment among staff members in terms of salaries and working hours.

56. The Standing Committee took note of document C/110/7 and recommended that the Council adopt the proposed draft resolution set out in Annex II to that document.

XIV. Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General

57. The Inspector General, introducing the document entitled Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General (S/25/8), outlined the challenges and accomplishments of his Office over the past year. While approval had been given to increase staffing levels, it was difficult to recruit new investigators owing to high levels of demand and competition for qualified candidates within the United Nations system. Eight new investigators had recently been hired, however, and investigation consultants were being used until the remaining vacancies could be filled. The Office would continue to prioritize allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, without neglecting other types of serious misconduct. All cases were subject to meticulous risk analysis. While the rise in the number of allegations was a sign of trust in the Office, investigation staff were struggling to process them, particularly in more volatile contexts. He thanked the Government of the United States of America for its financial and moral support for the Office's systems-based approach.

58. In terms of the evaluation function, he noted that the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (2018–2020) was subject to varying interpretations, but that the Office's staff had a clear idea of their ultimate objectives under United Nations guidelines. The completion of 34 internal audits during the reporting period was a notable achievement, and there had been significant improvement in the

number of recommendations implemented by management. While the Office had identified a number of recurrent findings and outstanding recommendations, many of them applied to duty stations with high security risk levels and rapid staff turnover. It was therefore important to ensure segregation of duties and to communicate recommendations directly to the units responsible. Summaries of internal audit reports continued to be made available to the public online, but they could be improved by adding the management's perspective to complement that of the Office. Full audit reports would be published in future years.

59. Representatives of Member States stressed the importance of internal justice in general and the Office's work in particular. One delegate urged the Administration to increase staffing and align its grading system with that of other organizations so as to compete more successfully for qualified investigators. Another speaker, underlining the importance of ensuring that the Office had sufficient resources, enquired how it gathered complaints in the field, how IOM was maximizing collaboration with other organizations to address staffing shortages, and what efforts were being made to establish a culture of risk awareness. She also welcomed the fact that part of the softly earmarked funding provided by Sweden had been used to develop monitoring and evaluation training initiatives and said that her country would support further strengthening of IOM oversight and the work of the Office.

60. The Deputy Director General expressed appreciation to the Inspector General for his willingness to work with the Administration to address the challenges his Office faced. Exceptionally, the staffing problem was not due to lack of funding but to the recruitment challenges described by the Inspector General. For its part, the Administration had done everything possible to accelerate the recruitment process and had even proceeded with direct recruitment where the Director General had deemed it appropriate. In another challenge to the Office's work, several of the allegations it had received came from locations with security restrictions that required even consultants to receive special training and authorization; some consultants were unwilling to go to such locations.

61. It had been decided that the Office could be strengthened by moving the Head of Internal Audit and some auditors and investigators working in Manila to Geneva, since the Office worked closely with the Office of Legal Affairs at Headquarters. The Administration took note of the internal audit findings, which it hoped could be broadly addressed through the IGF. The new case-management system expected to be in place by February 2020 would also provide better data to report to Member States.

62. The Inspector General, responding to a question from one Member State, said that a system was in place to encourage whistle-blowing. Upon receiving an allegation, the circumstances and individuals involved were examined, and the Ethics and Conduct Office was immediately contacted with a list of staff to benefit from whistle-blower protection.

63. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/8 and of the comments made by Member States.

XV. Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee

64. The Chairperson of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee activities from September 2018 to August 2019 (S/25/10), which included a proposal to extend the terms of three of the Committee's founding members and stagger their replacement in order to create continuity and allow the Organization's management and Member States to benefit from their experience and expertise. The report discussed the Committee's work during the year and raised some concerns about the Organization, relating to the Office of the Inspector General,

investigations, internal audits, evaluations and governance. Since the report had been published, the Committee had continued to pursue its activities, holding further meetings on matters of importance.

65. Concerning the lack of support felt by the Inspector General from his staff and IOM management, it was suggested that he be given support in his role in order to exercise the necessary authority. In the light of an apparent increase in complaints from auditees about the activities of internal auditors, the Committee considered that the IOM Standards of Conduct should be revised and additional examples provided of what actually constituted harassment. There was a perception that some staff appointments lacked transparency and that top management did not accord sufficient attention to internal oversight. Overall, there was significant room for improvement in the Organization's system of oversight to ensure transparency at all levels. The Committee was keen to play its part in tackling the situation. It would use its meeting in January 2020 to focus more on evaluations.

66. The Director General said that he did not accept the perception of a lack of engagement among the Organization's top management in addressing the challenges of the internal justice system. The survey that had detected a lack of trust in the internal justice system had been made public by top management, which operated in a climate of total transparency and continued to be fully committed to identifying and finding solutions to issues within the system.

67. The Deputy Director General, echoing her response to the presentation by the Inspector General, agreed with the Director General that the commitment of top management to internal oversight was greater than ever. Owing to a lack of applicants for investigator positions, direct appointments had been made in order to accelerate the recruitment process. The views of the Head of Internal Audit, whose move to Geneva was welcome, and the Chairperson of the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee would be taken into account in tackling potential problems in the application of the IGF.

68. In response to a question from one delegate, the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee said that his three main recommendations for improving the functioning of the Office were the provision of separate coaching for the Inspector General and the Head of Internal Audit; the provision of an open-plan office for internal audit staff when they moved buildings, in order to re-establish contact among individuals; and the participation of the Head of Internal Audit in internal audit missions as a team member so as to experience the challenges faced by internal audit staff at first hand.

69. The Standing Committee took note of document S/25/10 and of the Committee's proposal to exceptionally extend the mandates of three of its members and agreed that the Chairperson of the Standing Committee and the Director General, in keeping with the normal procedure and after appropriate consultations with Member States, would make a final decision and report the result to the Standing Committee at its next meeting.

XVI. Closure of the session

70. The Chairperson declared the Twenty-fifth Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance closed on Thursday, 31 October 2019, at 6.15 p.m.