

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

Twenty-seventh Session

REPORT OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Geneva

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ABBREVIATIONS..... | ii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Adoption of the agenda | 2 |
| Statement by the Director General..... | 2 |
| Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020..... | 3 |
| Status report on outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget and Member State voting rights | 3 |
| Programme and Budget for 2021..... | 3 |
| Progress report on the implementation of the External Auditor’s recommendations | 5 |
| Report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Budget Reform | 6 |
| Internal Governance Framework: summary of progress to date..... | 6 |
| Update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building | 8 |
| Review of the terms of reference of the Working Group on IOM–UN Relations and Related Issues | 9 |
| Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership: | 10 |
| Sustaining and scaling private sector engagement to protect migrant workers | 10 |
| Update on the IOM migration data strategy..... | 11 |
| Report on the IOM Development Fund..... | 12 |
| Report on the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States | 13 |
| Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General..... | 14 |
| Closure of the session | 15 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
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| COVID-19 | Coronavirus disease 2019 |
| ICT | Information and communications technology |
| IDPs | Internally displaced persons |
| IGF | Internal Governance Framework |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IRIS | International Recruitment and Integrity System |
| MIRAC | Migration Resource Allocation Committee |
| MOPAN | Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network |
| OSI | Operational Support Income |
| PSEA | Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse |
| UNDIS | United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy |
| UNHCR | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

**REPORT OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE
ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION**

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance met at the Centre International de Conférences Genève for its Twenty-seventh Session on 27 October 2020. The Session was chaired by Mr Morten Jespersen (Denmark). Two meetings were held, with some participants following proceedings remotely.

2. The following Member States were represented:¹

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Afghanistan | Colombia | Hungary | Mongolia | Slovakia |
| Algeria | Congo | Iceland | Montenegro | Slovenia |
| Angola | Costa Rica | India | Morocco | South Africa |
| Argentina | Côte d'Ivoire | Iran (Islamic Republic of) | Mozambique | Spain |
| Armenia | Croatia | Ireland | Myanmar | Sri Lanka |
| Australia | Cuba | Israel | Namibia | Sudan |
| Austria | Cyprus | Italy | Nepal | Suriname |
| Azerbaijan | Czechia | Jamaica | Netherlands | Sweden |
| Bahamas | Denmark | Japan | Nicaragua | Switzerland |
| Bangladesh | Djibouti | Jordan | Niger | Thailand |
| Belarus | Ecuador | Kazakhstan | Nigeria | Tunisia |
| Belgium | Egypt | Kenya | Norway | Turkey |
| Bolivia | El Salvador | Lao People's Democratic Republic | Pakistan | Ukraine |
| (Plurinational State of) | Estonia | Latvia | Panama | United Kingdom |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Eswatini | Libya | Peru | United Republic of Tanzania |
| Botswana | Ethiopia | Lithuania | Philippines | United States of America |
| Brazil | Finland | Luxembourg | Poland | Uruguay |
| Bulgaria | France | Madagascar | Portugal | Vanuatu |
| Burkina Faso | Gabon | Maldives | Republic of Korea | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) |
| Burundi | Gambia | Mali | Moldova | |
| Cabo Verde | Germany | Malta | Romania | |
| Cameroon | Ghana | Marshall Islands | Rwanda | Viet Nam |
| Canada | Greece | Mauritania | Senegal | Yemen |
| Chad | Guatemala | Mauritius | Serbia | Zambia |
| Chile | Haiti | Mexico | Seychelles | Zimbabwe |
| China | Holy See | | Sierra Leone | |
| | Honduras | | | |

3. The Member States agreed to a request made by the Permanent Representatives of the Delegation of the European Union and of Germany, 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/27/1/Rev.1).

¹ The list of participants is contained in document S/27/16. Unless otherwise indicated, all documents and slide presentations are available on the Standing Committee section of the IOM website.

Adoption of the agenda

4. The provisional agenda contained in document S/27/1/Rev.1 was adopted by the Standing Committee and subsequently issued as document S/27/17.

Statement by the Director General

5. The Director General, welcoming participants to the Standing Committee's Twenty-seventh Session, delivered the statement contained in extenso in document S/27/14, highlighting the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Organization's programmes and internal mechanisms and setting out its current activities and priorities. With regard to recent press reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he stressed that IOM was addressing the allegations both independently and in conjunction with other United Nations system entities.

6. A number of Member States and the representative of one regional group commended the Organization and its staff for their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing particular attention to the need to protect the most vulnerable. Underlining the importance of inter-agency cooperation, the representative of the same regional group called on donors to support the IOM Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19. IOM's role as coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration was welcome and should be replicated at country level, including within United Nations country teams. Another representative echoed that view, while also noting the need to address the Organization's overreliance on project funding. Flexible, multi-year funding from Member States would alleviate the problem. The Organization should strengthen results-based management and reporting and improve its risk management.

7. Another Member State encouraged the Organization to adopt the highest standards of management, oversight and accountability and to implement mechanisms to address misconduct, in line with the External Auditor's recommendations. He asked how the Organization would build on the momentum of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement. The Organization's budget for 2021 was significantly smaller than its revised budget for 2020. Basing budgets on confirmed, rather than predicted, funding undermined their utility as a steering tool. Moreover, the budget should reflect the Organization's environmental efforts.

8. Responding to the points raised, the Director General praised those IOM field officials who had continued providing support to migrants throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. While the virus had been controlled in most IOM camps, travel restrictions meant that around three million migrants who wished to return home were stranded. The United Nations system had mounted a joint response, led by United Nations country teams, and IOM had played a key role in protecting migrants and other vulnerable groups. Of particular concern were the conditions experienced by migrants in detention and the issue of forced deportations, which posed a health risk both to the migrants themselves and to the communities to which they were returned.

9. Predicting the financial impact of the pandemic was difficult. Although support for migrants was not expected to decrease, the pandemic had worsened existing humanitarian crises. Caution had therefore been exercised when drafting the Organization's budget for 2021. The High-level Panel on Internal Displacement represented a unique opportunity to seek durable solutions for internally displaced persons, and IOM was preparing to contribute its expertise and experience in that regard.

Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020

10. The Standing Committee had before it a document entitled Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020 (C/111/7) for consideration in conjunction with the Programme and Budget for 2020 (C/110/8) and the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2020 (S/26/4).

11. The Administration reported that the Administrative Part of the Budget remained unchanged at CHF 52,242,614, as approved in document S/26/4. The level of OSI also remained unchanged at USD 123 million.

12. The Operational Part of the Budget had increased from USD 1,732 million to USD 1,940 million. The level of the budget was slightly lower than in 2019 as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, which had meant that certain activities involving the movement of people had not been possible. Pursuant to Standing Committee Resolution No. 24 of 1 July 2020 on the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2020, the Administration had allocated USD 10.16 million from the OSI reserve, out of the utilizable balance of USD 14.25 million. Those funds were being used to strengthen the Organization's capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, complete the movement of its data centres to the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Facility in Valencia, Spain, strengthen systems to detect and prevent cyberattacks, and consolidate the staff payroll. Additional information would be provided in the annual financial report.

13. The representative of one regional group welcomed the Organization's response to the pandemic — both its activities on the ground and the initiative to draw down funds from the OSI reserve.

14. The Standing Committee recommended that the Council take note of the Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2020 (C/111/7).

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

15. 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 2020) (C/111/4/Rev.1). The update reflected the additional contributions received since the Twenty-sixth Session of the Standing Committee. The total amount of outstanding contributions remained very high, which gave cause for concern. As at 30 September 2020, 30 Member States had been subject to Article 4 of the IOM Constitution; of those, 14 had lost their voting rights. Since document C/111/4/Rev.1 had been issued, payments towards assessed contributions had been received from Cabo Verde, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Ukraine.

16. The Standing Committee took note of the contents of document C/111/4/Rev.1 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.

Programme and Budget for 2021

17. The Administration gave a slide presentation highlighting the key points set out in the document entitled Programme and Budget for 2021 (C/111/6). The Administrative Part of the Budget had been prepared on the basis of zero nominal growth and amounted to CHF 52,242,614. The

Operational Part of the Budget was based on anticipated funding and was estimated at USD 913.4 million, which was 6.41 per cent higher than the 2020 budget of USD 858.3 million projected at the same time the previous year. The budget level would be updated in subsequent revisions to the budget, as additional funding was secured for the Organization's activities. The projected level of OSI – USD 128 million – had been estimated based on the previous year's results and current and expected trends.

18. One representative said that more detailed information on the delivery and funding of internal governance reforms should be included in the document. A representative of a regional group noted with satisfaction that an additional Deputy Director General post and the associated support structures would not affect Member States' financial contributions, welcomed the significant increase to the Operational Part of the Budget and encouraged Member States to increase their voluntary contributions to that part of the Budget.

19. Another Member State, while commending the increased funding for IOM's ICT needs and recognizing the increased workload of the Office of Legal Affairs, expressed surprise that neither of the investigator positions within the Office of the Inspector General currently funded through project funds had been transferred to OSI or the Administrative Part of the Budget and requested an update on plans for leadership positions within that Office. Consideration should be given to whether any of the proposed new positions could be covered by project funding or MIRAC funding so that more core resources could be channelled to supporting the progress made on internal justice. She emphasized that the Administration's Strategic Vision 2019–2023, referenced in paragraph 39 of document C/111/6, was distinct from the IOM Strategy adopted by Member States in 2007 and mentioned in paragraphs 35 and 36 of the document.

20. A fourth representative expressed dissatisfaction at the absence of a clearly drafted decision point on adopting the budget that could be amended by Member States if necessary — a recurring problem in Standing Committee documents. Another representative voiced concerns at the methodology used in preparing the budget: the Operational Part of the Budget consisted only of approved projects, but all possible administrative costs to be covered by assessed contributions and OSI were already included, potentially creating an imbalance should fewer projects than expected be approved, resulting in a lower level of OSI being generated.

21. The Director General said that the Business Transformation process, a key element of the ongoing internal governance reform, represented IOM's biggest financial burden because it involved the replacement of the enterprise resource planning system. Member States would be asked to guarantee funding for that purpose and the associated change management initiatives. Moreover, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Organization had seen an increase in attacks on its ICT systems and attempts to compromise the integrity of its financial management. The decision had therefore been taken to upgrade its ICT defences.

22. The Administration had decided to give the Office of the Inspector General greater flexibility to mobilize its resources appropriately. The backlog of internal justice cases had been cleared, and the number of new complaints submitted to the Office demonstrated renewed confidence in the system. However, the need for follow-up had placed an additional burden on the Office of Legal Affairs. Responding to a question from the floor, he explained that the new and transferred positions within the Office of the Inspector General were additional posts and did not constitute a change to the strengthening plan. The Office's inspections, which aimed to introduce preventive measures in cases that did not warrant a fully-fledged investigation, were hampered by the absence of the necessary structures. A new inspector post at the P-5 level had therefore been created, and one role in legal oversight had been transferred from Manila to Geneva.

23. The grading of leadership positions within the Office of the Inspector General had been reassessed under the IGF. That process was linked in part to the possible creation of an additional Deputy Director General post and the consequent redistribution of responsibilities within the leadership team. The grades and functions of positions across the Organization, including in the Office of the Inspector General, were currently under review.

24. The Administration added that the methodology used to draft the budget document was based on the Organization's funding structure. The Administration's OSI projections had always been used as targets; if surpassed, as they usually were, the excess was placed in the OSI reserve to be used in the unlikely event that targets were not achieved. Page 5 of document C/111/6 provided an overview of the decisions to be made, for ease of reference, and was not intended to replace the draft resolution on the budget that would be submitted to the Council in due course.

25. The Standing Committee took note of the Programme and Budget for 2021, as set out in document C/111/6, and recommended that the Council approve a figure of CHF 52,242,614 for the Administrative Part of the Budget and USD 913.4 million for the Operational Part of the Budget.

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

26. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations (S/27/8), outlining the three types of audit – certification, performance and compliance – undertaken by the External Auditor. The number of outstanding recommendations had decreased from 41 at the end of 2018 to 38 at the end of 2019. Most of the outstanding recommendations related to certification and performance audits, and as such were strategic recommendations that required time and resources to implement. Some of the challenges in country offices related to acquisition and disposal of local assets, tax exemptions, procurement, and immunities and privileges, which all took time to negotiate. The Organization was committed to acting on all recommendations and several were already being addressed, including those relating to assessed contribution receivables, the processing of medical claims, the new Headquarters building project, and the vendor management review.

27. One representative observed that one of the oldest outstanding recommendations related to enhancing confidentiality in ICT systems, which was worrying because such systems quickly became outdated. The Administration should identify which audit findings were the highest priority for the Organization and prioritize investments in the oversight and management of core institutional funds. Another representative added that the Administration should concentrate on those recommendations that would lead to cost savings.

28. Responding to comments made, the Administration noted that it would be difficult to identify which recommendations were the highest priority for the Organization, since most – including those relating to procurement and to confidentiality in ICT systems – were being addressed in the context of the Business Transformation process and needed to be viewed as part of a bigger picture. Progress had been achieved since the recommendation on enhancing confidentiality in ICT systems had first been made, but the threat of hacking kept the issue current. The Administration continued to make every effort to enhance security and protect its IT infrastructure in the face of evolving challenges.

29. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/8.

Report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Budget Reform

30. The Chairperson of the Working Group on Budget Reform, introducing his report on the Working Group's activities (S/27/12/Rev.1), noted that the Working Group had met three times during 2020 to discuss two issues: rethinking the Organization's core funding model and proposals to update budget regulations and practices. On the first item, in view of the unpredictability of the existing funding model, the Chairperson had recommended that the Administration provide the Working Group with scenarios outlining the potential financial impact on the assessed contributions of Member States of the proposed funding options. On the second item, significant progress had been made, as embodied in the draft resolution on changing the budget regulations and practices set out in the annex to document S/27/12/Rev.1, which was based on Standing Committee Resolution No. 18.

31. The Administration reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring Member State oversight of drawdowns from the OSI reserve, the importance of which had been stressed by the Working Group. If the Standing Committee endorsed the proposed amendments, which incorporated Member State comments received since the Working Group's last meeting, the revised resolution would be submitted to the Council for adoption.

32. During the ensuing discussion, broad support was expressed for the proposed changes to the budget regulations and practices.

33. The Director General, responding to comments from several Member States, noted that the proposed changes in the budget regulations and practices would improve flexibility while maintaining full transparency. The Organization's commitment to staff security would not change in any practical way. While a time of pandemic and economic crisis was not ideal for discussions of assessed contributions, there was an existential need for the Organization to address the challenge of funding its core structure. Indeed, the pandemic had demonstrated how reliant the Organization was on projectized funding. A predictable and stable funding model was vital, so the Administration would continue modelling the various options proposed, in coordination with the Chairperson of the Working Group.

34. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/12/Rev.1 and recommended that the Council adopt the draft resolution annexed thereto.

Internal Governance Framework: summary of progress to date

35. The Deputy Director General introduced documents S/27/INF/1, entitled Update on the application of the Internal Governance Framework, and S/27/9, entitled Update on risk management.

36. The Administration gave a slide presentation outlining the goals of and areas of activity within Workstream 3: Business Transformation, as detailed in *Application of the Internal Governance Framework Work Plan*. Workstream 3 was one of the most critical parts of the IGF, covering budget, financial management, procurement and logistics, human resources management, contract management and other areas required to ensure the good custodianship of the Organization's assets.

37. The project was planned to take four years, including time for stabilization. A key advantage of the new generation of enterprise resource planning technologies was ease of use, which would reduce training requirements for field staff and enhance productivity. The project, formally launched the previous week, would be collaborative from the start, with staff involved in identifying existing issues and finding solutions. The core team had already been established, with all stream leads identified.

38. During 2021, the baselining process, which was already under way, would be completed in order to identify particular issues and challenges and clearly define the scope of the project. Subsequent phases would include examination of existing business models and consideration of how support functions would operate; data analysis and clean-up; and a leadership workshop. Checkpoints throughout the process would ensure that progress remained aligned with the Organization's strategic priorities. The first such checkpoint would be the leadership workshop, when the future vision would be presented to the IOM leadership, the IGF Board and the Regional Directors. A field coordination network of around 250 staff members across the IOM regions, including Chiefs of Mission and subject matter experts, would help design the future vision.

39. Representatives of several Member States expressed support for efforts to strengthen the Organization's core structure; the IGF Work Plan was ambitious and comprehensive. However, the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national budgets might affect their ability to provide both project-related and core funding. A number of Member States asked whether a phased approach to implementation could be considered.

40. Responding to comments made, the Deputy Director General welcomed the broad support expressed for the IGF and the Business Transformation, which was a key element in several IGF initiatives and addressed a number of the External Auditor's recommendations. She also thanked those Member States that had provided the unearmarked contributions that were funding several investigator positions, without which it would not have been possible to clear the backlog of cases submitted to the Office of the Inspector General. Much of the progress in implementing the IGF had been financed by unearmarked contributions.

41. With regard to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, the Organization was fully committed to enhancing its capacity to deal with such cases and pursuing its zero-tolerance policy. Consideration was being given to updating policy frameworks, and awareness-raising and training among staff members continued. A new position would be created at Headquarters for a coordinator to lead the policy revision process, looking in particular at whether a separate policy on sexual harassment was needed, and coordinate efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

42. Annex 3 of the Work Plan contained a number of preliminary performance management indicators, and specific key performance indicators would be identified for each functional area. As requested, a specific briefing on for Member States on procurement and supply chain management could be organized. A mapping exercise had recently been conducted on procurement and supply chain management across different field missions, which had generated a number of recommendations that were being analysed and would be cross-referenced with the initial IGF strategy to find solutions to various procurement and supply chain challenges.

43. With regard to accountability, the delegation of authority within the Organization was being examined to determine the roles and responsibilities of different posts, particularly in terms of decision-making. The Administration would consider the recommendations emerging from the meta-evaluation to see how they could be incorporated into the new strategy for 2021–2023. A peer review of IOM evaluation policy by the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was planned for the first quarter of 2021. The Administration was also looking at how better to connect evaluation, risk management and results-based management, since – taken together – they would facilitate learning as an organization.

44. The IGF was in itself a prioritization of issues to be addressed within the Organization. They had been further prioritized through the Business Transformation, which established a sequence for planned activities. All areas were important; nevertheless, the logical sequence of events sometimes

required ultimately less important things to be done first for the sake of holistic progress. Expressing appreciation for the indications of financial support for the Business Transformation specifically, and the IGF in general, she added that unearmarked contributions to MIRAC had been fundamental for moving IGF initiatives forward. The Organization was counting on the same – if not a higher – level of unearmarked contributions in future. Not all IGF activities required additional funding, but some, mostly relating to staffing, did. The current combination of OSI, MIRAC funds and drawdown from the OSI reserve would cover most IGF activities, but some additional funding would be required in relation to the Business Transformation. The Administration and Member States must work together to find a solution.

45. The Standing Committee took note of documents S/27/INF/1 and S/27/9.

Update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building

46. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing document S/27/13/Rev.1 (Plans for the IOM Headquarters building: update 4) and explained that a steering committee set up to provide internal oversight, chaired by the Deputy Director General, continued to provide guidance to the Headquarters building project. The Administration had also engaged in a series of consultations with experts, as well as with other international organizations undertaking similar projects, in order to learn from their experience. Assessments had been undertaken of the current building, the land on which the construction would take place, environmental concerns and security considerations. Some trees on the site were subject to preservation regulations and the Administration was discussing how to proceed with the host Government. The projected cost estimate had been revised upwards to CHF 72 million. Document S/27/13/Rev.1 gave a detailed breakdown of where and why the changes had been made. Member States were reassured, however, that it would not have any impact on their assessed contributions.

47. Several representatives stressed the importance of the principles contained in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy to a project such as the new IOM Headquarters building and welcomed its inclusion in the draft resolution set out in annex II to document S/27/13/Rev.1. That Strategy represented a milestone in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. It was underlined that, although the concept of universal design the project espoused need not be explicit in the resolution, it was a key principle that should guide the work of the Organization, including in choosing the architectural firm for the project. The construction of a new building gave IOM a clear opportunity to lead by example from the outset.

48. Several representatives noted that concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic might affect the spatial design and workplace layout. Other similar projects had seen their priorities shift from a focus on creating open co-working environments towards more contained spaces.

49. One Member State asked whether the budget estimate was likely to increase any further. It would be preferable for any additional costs to be included within the existing budget. Another noted that, since the building project would take a number of years, it was important to ensure the highest level of transparency in documentation. The total amounts to be covered by IOM beyond the loan should be specified in the draft resolution.

50. Responding to comments, the Administration clarified that accessibility issues had been taken into account in all initial assessments. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, consideration was being given to a more flexible and adaptable building configuration, with more closed offices if necessary.

51. With regard to the draft resolution, a preambular paragraph could be added to explain that, in addition to the loan for the project, the Organization would have to cover CHF 10.4 million for movable assets in the new building, the cost of which could not be included in the host Government loan.

52. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/13/Rev.1 and recommended that the Council adopt the draft resolution with the amendments to the preamble suggested by the Administration.

Review of the terms of reference of the Working Group on IOM–UN Relations and Related Issues

53. The Director General introduced a proposal to amend the name and terms of reference of the Working Group on IOM–UN Relations and Related Issues (S/27/11) in the light of IOM's status as a related organization within the United Nations system.

54. During the ensuing discussion, several Member States expressed support for the proposed new name and terms of reference for the Working Group. One Member State welcomed the opportunity to continue discussing relations between IOM and the multilateral system, particularly in view of IOM's increased role in migration coordination. The Organization had outgrown its governance structure and the regional groups should be reviewed, as they did not include all Member States but had an impact on representation. The same Member State, supported by several others, proposed further amendments to the terms of reference to include discussion of regional groups, with a view to ensuring that all Member States were included in a regional group and had equal access to representation on the Bureau. However, another representative said that, regardless of the issue of geographical representation on the Bureau, IOM and its membership would not be well served by further regionalization.

55. The same representative considered that the revised terms of reference for the Working Group would not provide the desired opportunity to discuss organizational strategies and priorities. The Working Group should focus on implementation of the Internal Governance Framework – an area without an avenue for regular consultation with Member States – or revert to its original purpose of reviewing strategy or discussing a results-based framework for the Organization agreed by Member States. Two representatives suggested that the terms of reference should be redrafted to reflect a broad focus on organizational priorities, governance and partnerships.

56. One Member State said that the title, terms of reference and mandate of the Working Group were no longer appropriate. Partnerships and governance issues should be discussed by the Standing Committee and the Working Group disbanded, if it were no longer needed. However, another Member said that the Working Group provided space for inclusive and transparent discussion of institutional matters; the review of its terms of reference and title should be organized as soon as possible.

57. The Director General took note of the consensus on revisiting the Working Group's terms of reference and the need for further consultations that would include examination of its remit. Dialogue with Member States on the IGF should be better structured, and the forum for that dialogue reconsidered: the Working Group on Budget Reform might be more appropriate, given the implications of institutional changes on budgetary sustainability. The Working Group on IOM–UN Relations and Related Issues was the right forum, however, to consider inclusivity within the Bureau. Following consultations with interested Member States, the Administration would distribute revised terms of reference for the Working Group to all Member States and would ask the Bureau to consider the way forward. A decision should be made before the Standing Committee next met, if possible.

58. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/11 and invited the Director General to undertake further consultation with Member States, so that the terms of reference might be amended and subsequently approved by Member States.

Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership:

Sustaining and scaling private sector engagement to protect migrant workers

59. The document entitled Sustaining and scaling private sector engagement to protect migrant workers (S/27/3) was introduced by the Administration in a slide presentation. Work in that area focused on labour migration, ethical recruitment and the rights of migrant workers in the global economy. The Organization's multifaceted and multi-stakeholder approach was based on four pillars: prioritizing engagement with the private sector to improve due diligence practices and safeguard migrant workers' rights; enhancing the migrant worker voice and migrant worker empowerment through direct engagement with migrants; cooperating with governments to strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks on global supply chains; and encouraging existing multi-stakeholder initiatives to prioritize migrant workers. In June 2020, IOM had published the Montreal Recommendations on Recruitment: A Road Map towards Better Regulation – the outcome document of the first global conference on the regulation of international recruitment and protection of migrant workers.

60. Future areas of work included engagement with micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and a focus on national and local manufacturing and industries. The informal economy should be prioritized, as existing strategies were often unable to influence conditions in that sector. The COVID-19 pandemic had encouraged global companies to focus on supply chain resilience, which in the view of IOM encompassed supply chain sustainability and therefore the business and human rights agenda. A global International Recruitment and Integrity System (IRIS) policy network would be launched at the end of 2020. The network would be Member State-led, with IOM acting as secretariat. Member States were invited to join IOM in that work, which would provide an opportunity to share and improve practices related to recruitment regulation and protection of migrant workers.

61. Two representatives expressed support for the proposed IRIS policy network and encouraged other Member States to engage with the initiative and facilitate multi-jurisdictional dialogue and collaboration on those issues. The representative of one regional group, noting the timeliness for discussing the topic, recognized the role of IOM in protecting migrant workers through engagement with the private sector and the progress achieved by developing IRIS, standards and guidance, and the Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST) initiative. Active engagement with the private sector was a necessary complement to international human rights and labour standards, particularly in areas where labour inspection was lacking or supply chains operated on the margins of the formal economy. The growing challenge had been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The alignment of the Administration's four-pillar approach with United Nations guidance on business and human rights was welcome. Cooperation between IOM and other partners, including relevant United Nations agencies, would foster a comprehensive approach covering all stages of the employment relationship, and multi-stakeholder platforms would offer additional benefits for joint advocacy and capacity-building. One Member State noted that the conference on the regulation of international recruitment and protection of migrant workers, held in Montreal in 2019, had demonstrated the importance of dialogue among regulators in sending and receiving countries. The Member State also stressed the importance of sharing experiences to identify good practices and increased cooperation to support the implementation of effective recruitment regulation.

62. The Administration thanked Member States for their positive comments, noting that work on the protection of migrant workers, and on ethical recruitment in particular, was well supported through the CREST and IRIS initiatives.

63. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/3.

Update on the IOM migration data strategy

64. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Summary of the IOM migration data strategy: informing policy and action on migration, mobility and displacement (S/27/4). A focus on data supported sound decision-making and helped to inform policy, action and public opinion. The IOM migration data strategy had been developed within the framework of the IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023 and had been aligned with the data strategy recently released by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Intended to achieve stronger governance outcomes and positive impacts for migrants and societies, the strategy included three high-level objectives to guide IOM, as well as deliverables and an indicative list of interventions. It was underpinned by overarching principles rooted in the human rights and supplemented by a set of data-specific principles, such as data protection, data security and ethical approaches to data. Within IOM, improvements in four areas were required to enable effective implementation of the strategy: internal governance, staff capacity, technical infrastructure and sustainable resourcing.

65. The IOM response to the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated the Organization's effectiveness and the relevance of a migration data strategy. Building on the global capacity of the Displacement Tracking Matrix and the work of experts in different programming areas, regular, up-to-date and comprehensive data were being tracked on a number of issues of interest, including global travel restrictions and the impact on IDPs, migrants and migratory flows. Monitoring of such data would continue in 2021. Data on IDPs were a priority, as IOM was the largest primary source of data on internal displacement, and a strategic approach to IDP data was being developed.

66. During the ensuing discussion, Member States welcomed the migration data strategy as a key step towards realization of the Organization's Strategic Vision, as well as for strengthening migration data governance across the IOM. One Member State underlined the need to rethink IOM data structures and called for a review of the Organization's migration data analysis initiatives and functions with a view to rationalizing them. A regional group highlighted the role of IOM in filling data gaps to inform policymaking, programming, and coordination among the United Nations entities and its existing cooperation on data with the Organization – namely through the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre and the Displacement Tracking Matrix – while underlining that any new data collection initiative should respond to an identified gap in order to avoid duplication. The same regional group emphasized the importance of IOM's role in data capacity-building and noted that the new Start-up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which was coordinated by IOM, could be used to support initiatives in that area. Innovation was key to ensure that the collection and use of data kept pace with the increasing complexity of migration. At the same time, innovation must be accompanied by consideration for privacy, security and commercial and ethical sensitivities and follow the highest global standards of data protection. One representative underlined that data must constitute the foundation for all IOM activities, from policy development to organizational decisions.

67. The representative of another regional group welcomed the focus in the strategy on aligning the Organization's programmes and activities with the Sustainable Development Goals and other development frameworks, which underlined the importance of up-to-date data. The IOM Continental Strategy for Africa 2020–2024 also prioritized data, and its implementation would strengthen cooperation on data, research and policy analysis in the field of African migration. The COVID-19

pandemic had revealed the gaps and imperfections in existing data systems for all forms of population movement, and the consideration of such issues in IOM policy at all levels and in all sectors was therefore essential.

68. One Member State welcomed the reassurance that the migration data strategy fully respected the mandates of all United Nations entities and requested more information on IOM's cooperation with relevant entities and initiatives. Predictable funding was critical, and IOM should therefore meet the funding requirements for the new data structure in the context of broader strengthening of internal governance; those requirements should be contemplated in budget reform discussions. Another Member State said that emphasis should be placed on access to reliable and up-to-date data. One representative, noting the importance of gender-based data analysis, asked what would be done to strengthen the collection of data that could be disaggregated by sex and age and ensure that data informed policy and programming. The Displacement Tracking Matrix had been instrumental in increasing data coordination and sharing, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

69. The Director General, welcoming the support of Member States for the migration data strategy, acknowledged that some key elements needed clarification, particularly with regard to implementation. Data governance within the Organization was crucial: identifying gaps and avoiding duplication would ensure the use of comparable, high-quality data for analysis, planning and costing. The decentralized collection of data was invaluable, as seen in the use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix to provide data on the human mobility impact of COVID-19; predictable funding was needed to sustain the myriad activities in that area.

70. The abundance of actors in migration data required a collaborative approach. The strategy sought to improve the work of IOM and prepare for comparative data analyses and other exercises to streamline data collection and analysis across the United Nations system. The first Africa Migration Report, published jointly by IOM and the African Union, provided data on the reality of migration in Africa and was intended to be the first in a series. The Organization remained open to cooperation with the African Union on migration data.

71. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/4 and of the comments made by Member States.

Report on the IOM Development Fund

72. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled IOM Development Fund – Status report: 1 January to 30 September 2020 (S/27/10). Over USD 21 million had been made available in 2020 to support developing Member States. It thanked the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Sweden and the United States of America for their earmarked contributions to the Fund, which had helped meet the high demand for capacity-building projects. The Government of Japan had initially funded a part-time Junior Professional Officer position, which was now covered from the Fund's budget.

73. National and regional project budget ceilings had been increased. The allocation of funding for projects was just short of the target of 75 per cent, largely owing to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A final review of pending prioritized applications was close to completion. Certain innovative initiatives, like the diaspora engagement project in Madagascar and the youth-led fabrication lab in Djibouti, were being replicated in other eligible Member States. In addition, the IRIS Self-Assessment for Ethical Recruitment (SAFER) tool was being rolled out across labour sectors globally to improve the practices of private recruitment agencies. Several initiatives under the Public Relations and Fundraising Strategy 2020–2025 and action plan had been postponed during the

pandemic, although some activities were being implemented using social media. The reviews conducted in 2020 and the main recommendations and findings of ex-post evaluations were available online, and a meta-analysis of external evaluations would be produced in the first quarter of 2021.

74. The Standing Committee viewed a short video about the IOM project Enhancing Migration Governance in Brazil, which aimed to foster migration policy dialogue and the sharing and implementation of good practice.

75. The representative of Brazil expressed appreciation for the project, which was enhancing the integration and autonomy of migrants and refugees in his country.

76. Two representatives expressed appreciation for the work of the Fund and the Administration's commitment to optimizing resources and improving oversight. Fixing the Fund's budgetary allocation would bring more predictability to the budget available. One representative hoped that – once finalized – the fixed budgetary allocation would not be further reduced and that countries would be able to continue to look to IOM for seed funding and capacity-building support through the Fund. One Member State took note of the projects undertaken in 2020, particularly the innovative initiatives that were being replicated in other countries, and welcomed the monitoring and evaluation of projects. Fund managers should continue to select projects that addressed cross-cutting issues. In that regard, Member States were reminded that the payment of outstanding assessed contributions would allow economies in transition to access support for capacity-building at a level that often exceeded the amount owed.

77. The representative of one regional group expressed appreciation for the growth of the Fund, in view of the help it had provided to address migration challenges in that region. Regular informal engagement with the Fund's management would be appreciated. The OSI allocation to the Fund should be reviewed regularly, given the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on demand for further support. Two other representatives also noted the pandemic's impact on the Fund: one welcomed efforts to diversify the Fund's resources in order to address increasing migration challenges, while the other encouraged Member States to support the Fund through direct voluntary contributions.

78. The Administration thanked Member States for their comments. The request for further informal engagement with the Fund's management would be followed up in the first quarter of 2021.

79. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/10 and of the comments made by Member States.

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

80. The Legal Counsel introduced the document entitled Seventh annual report of the Director General on improvements in the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States (S/27/5), which covered the period from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020. During that time, agreements on privileges and immunities had been signed with four 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 100.

81. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/5 and recommended that the Council remain seized of the matter and reiterate its call to all States to grant the Organization privileges and immunities substantially similar to those of the United Nations specialized agencies.

Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General

82. The Deputy Inspector General gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General (S/27/6). The Office had faced a number of challenges over the past year, including the COVID-19 pandemic and significant staffing changes, but had achieved results nonetheless. Staffing levels had been maintained, and four posts had been added to the investigation function: one funded from OSI and three funded by MIRAC.

83. Although most investigation staff were now based in Geneva, the proposal to consolidate the internal audit and evaluation functions had been limited by cost considerations. Thanks to improved access to data, the report covered the period up to the end of August 2020, and future statistics presented to the Standing Committee would be similarly up-to-date. Several investigation missions had taken place in the Europe region when COVID-19 restrictions had permitted, and two more missions – to Egypt and Kenya – had been scheduled for later in 2020.

84. The workplan for internal audits had been revised, owing to the impact of travel restrictions on planned field work; nevertheless, a number of audit assignments had been concluded. Despite the difficult context, the number of outstanding audit recommendations had been reduced, compared with the previous year. In line with the practice in other United Nations agencies, remote audit protocols had also been developed. Certain types of work were hard to perform remotely, however, particularly in areas with poor connectivity or under lockdown, and the lack of international flights, particularly from Panama and Manila, had posed a problem for the internal audit unit, due to its decentralized structure. Investigations into alleged sexual abuse and exploitation were sensitive and could not be carried out properly in a virtual format.

85. Challenges for the future included the increase in allegations reported, which could probably be attributed to the increased responsiveness of the Office and its raised profile – helped by the “We Are All In” reporting platform. Reports of abuse of authority and workplace harassment, which required complex and time-consuming investigations, had increased substantially over the reporting period. While formal approval of budgetary independence for the Office had boosted its flexibility and efficiency, the exercise of budgetary independence at the operational level and of structural independence remained a work in progress.

86. Representatives of two Member States requested that the report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General be discussed earlier at future meetings, with one expressing a preference for the item to be placed close to the Programme and Budget on the agenda, due to its significance. The same two representatives noted efforts to enhance the independence of the Office and called for the additional temporary staff positions to receive permanent support. The grading of investigator posts should be reviewed to ensure they compared adequately to those in other parts of the United Nations system. One representative suggested that, as recommended by the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee, IOM and other agencies should consider a joint approach as a means of addressing concerns about investigative capacity. The recommendations by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations on the investigative function within the United Nations system should be reviewed by IOM, which should consider joining the Unit. Efforts to respond to the MOPAN recommendations were commendable and should continue; increased independence for the evaluation unit was important in that regard. The report on the peer review scheduled for December 2020 should be submitted to the Standing Committee for discussion, and the Office should continue its engagement with the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee as soon as the Committee was able to continue its work. Greater efforts should be made to implement outstanding audit recommendations, especially those classified as very high and high priority.

87. One representative called for a more robust response to allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation made against humanitarian actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the lessons learned from the investigation to be applied to IOM operations globally. The Administration should work with all relevant IOM departments to strengthen systems to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. Two other representatives requested more precise details of the investigation; one also asked whether the Administration had reviewed IOM operations in the country to identify possible further incidents, whether reputational risk was included as a factor in case management, and whether procedures or guidelines were in place to evaluate reputational risk in cases of misconduct.

88. The Deputy Inspector General, responding to points raised, said that allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo involved multiple United Nations agencies; IOM was participating in the investigation, which was being coordinated by the World Health Organization. All possible action had been taken by IOM, while avoiding interference in the collective investigation. Travel restrictions made it difficult to take action on the ground to determine whether there were other outstanding allegations. Once implemented, initiatives to address the issue would provide an opportunity for further allegations to be made if necessary. Responding to a request from the floor, she added that information about the classification of audit recommendations and the cost of investigations and evaluations would be provided in writing.

89. The Standing Committee took note of document S/27/6 and of the comments made by Member States.

Closure of the session

90. The Chairperson declared the Twenty-seventh Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance closed on Tuesday, 27 October 2020, at 6.15 p.m.