

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE**

**Thirtieth Session**

**REPORT OF THE**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE**

**ON THE THIRTIETH SESSION**

Geneva

23, 24 and 28 June 2022

Rapporteur: Mr T. Lee (Republic of Korea)



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## **Abbreviations**

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
OSI	Operational Support Income
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

**REPORT OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE  
ON THE THIRTIETH SESSION**

## Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance met for its Thirtieth Session on 23, 24 and 28 June 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Session was chaired by Ms C. Devandas Aguilar (Costa Rica). Five meetings were held. The first four took place at the Centre International de Conférences Genève on 23 and 24 June 2022 and were held in a hybrid format, with some participants following the proceedings via remote connection; the fifth was held on 28 June 2022 at the Palais des Nations.

2. The following Member States were represented.<sup>1</sup>

Algeria	Denmark	Libya	Senegal
Angola	Djibouti	Lithuania	Sierra Leone
Argentina	Dominican Republic	Luxembourg	Slovakia
Armenia	Ecuador	Madagascar	Slovenia
Australia	Egypt	Malawi	South Africa
Austria	Estonia	Mali	Spain
Azerbaijan	Eswatini	Malta	Sri Lanka
Bangladesh	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Sudan
Belarus	Fiji	Mauritius	Sweden
Belgium	Finland	Mexico	Switzerland
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	France	Montenegro	Thailand
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Georgia	Morocco	Timor-Leste
Botswana	Germany	Mozambique	Togo
Brazil	Ghana	Myanmar	Tunisia
Bulgaria	Greece	Namibia	Türkiye
Burkina Faso	Guatemala	Nauru	Ukraine
Cabo Verde	Haiti	Nepal	United Kingdom
Cambodia	Holy See	Netherlands	United Republic of Tanzania
Cameroon	Honduras	New Zealand	United States of America
Canada	Hungary	Nicaragua	Uruguay
Chad	India	Niger	Vanuatu
Chile	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Nigeria	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
China	Ireland	Norway	Viet Nam
Colombia	Israel	Pakistan	Yemen
Congo	Italy	Panama	Zambia
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Paraguay	Zimbabwe
Côte d'Ivoire	Japan	Peru	
Croatia	Kazakhstan	Philippines	
Cuba	Kenya	Poland	
Cyprus	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Portugal	
Czechia	Latvia	Republic of Korea	
	Lesotho	Romania	
		Russian Federation	

<sup>1</sup> The list of participants is contained in document S/30/12. Unless otherwise indicated, all documents and slide presentations are available on the [Standing Committee](#) section of the IOM website.

3. The Member States agreed to a request made by the Permanent Representatives of the Delegation of the European Union and of France, on behalf of the European Union rotating presidency, that representatives of the European Union participate as experts.

4. The Standing Committee observed a minute of silence in memory of the migrants killed on 24 June 2022 while attempting to cross the border between Morocco and Spain.

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

5. The provisional agenda contained in document S/30/1 was adopted by the Standing Committee and subsequently issued as document S/30/11.

#### **Credentials of representatives**

6. The Standing Committee noted that the Director General had examined the credentials of the representatives of the Member States listed in paragraph 2 and found them to be in order.

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

7. 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 9 May 2022) (C/113/5). Total outstanding assessed contributions for 2021 and previous years, plus the contributions still to be paid for 2022 as at that date, amounted to CHF 42,310,525, which was more than the amount outstanding on the same date in 2021. Since the document had been issued, however, payments had been received from nine Member States owing less than two years in arrears, and one Member State had made a partial payment towards its assessments of previous years. In addition, contributions received from three other Member States had led to their removal from the list of Member States subject to Article 4 of the IOM Constitution; 31 Member States were currently on that list, 19 of which had lost the right to vote.

8. The Administration reminded Member States in arrears that they had the option of agreeing a flexible payment plan enabling them to pay their outstanding contributions in the manner most convenient to them. Under such payment plans, Member States must make a first payment to settle their current annual assessed contribution and agree to a multi-year payment plan. They had the further option of paying their arrears in the local currency, provided the Organization was in a position to use the funds in the country concerned. At present, four of the Member States in arrears had negotiated a payment plan, but two had not met their obligations and were therefore considered to have lost their voting rights.

9. The Standing Committee took note of the contents of document C/113/5 and the additional information provided by the Administration. It urged Member States in arrears to pay their contributions in full or, in consultation with the Administration, to agree to a payment plan and to fully respect the payment conditions.

#### **Presentation by the Director General**

10. The Director General delivered a statement, supplemented by a slide presentation, in which he summed up the contents of the Abridged Annual Report for 2021 (C/113/4/Rev.1), the Annual Report for 2021 (C/113/INF/1/Rev.1), the document entitled Addressing the mobility dimensions of crises: IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework – 2021 Addendum (S/30/INF/1) and the Sixth Update on the Application of the Internal Governance Framework (S/30/INF/2). He reflected briefly on

events in 2021, in particular the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and several conflict-related situations and natural disasters, and their consequences for the Organization's work. He also updated the Standing Committee on institutional developments during the same period, in particular with regard to the Organization's operational and management frameworks.

11. The Standing Committee also had before it the draft resolution on the Annual Report for 2021 (S/30/L/1/Rev.1).

**(a) Annual Report for 2021**

12. In the ensuing discussion, deep appreciation was expressed for the dedication and adaptability shown by IOM staff members worldwide, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, including in many remote and conflict-stricken areas.

13. The Organization's work to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in migrant communities and to ensure that vaccination strategies included migrants received widespread commendation. The pandemic had altered migration routes and led to increasingly dangerous migratory journeys. Coordinated international efforts were therefore needed to provide protection, assistance and support to migrants in situations of vulnerability; countries of origin, transit and destination must share responsibility for protecting migrants' human rights. In addition, the pandemic's economic consequences, compounded by geopolitical developments and rising food and fuel prices, had particularly affected migrants, who were a vulnerable segment of society. Post-pandemic recovery programmes must be inclusive of migrants; those who had lost their jobs should be given the opportunity to return to work.

14. Two representatives saluted the Organization's work in respect of climate change, with one noting the need to consider the social, cultural and economic consequences of the forced relocation of communities as a consequence of climate change and related natural disasters. A third pointed to IOM's key role in providing data and knowledge to help governments and partners respond properly to the mobility dimension of climate change.

15. Members of the Standing Committee spoke on a number of other issues as well. They applauded the Administration's efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse and encouraged the Administration to strengthen action to raise awareness of those issues among IOM partners. They also welcomed the sharper focus on addressing sexual and gender-based violence and expressed support for the continued integration of that perspective across operations. In a climate of fear and mistrust, IOM had a role to play in tackling the xenophobia and discrimination faced by many migrants.

**(b) Update on current activities**

16. Appreciation was expressed for the role played by IOM in the preparations for and at the first International Migration Review Forum, which had taken place in May 2022 and aimed to make a difference in the lives of migrants and their communities through international cooperation and commitments. Member States welcomed the Progress Declaration adopted by the Review Forum and looked forward to continued IOM leadership on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

17. One regional group expressed agreement with the Director General's assessment of the impact on the Organization's work of both the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple new and protracted humanitarian crises. The situation in Ukraine, for example, was not only a critical driver of greater humanitarian need, it was also destabilizing global food markets and driving up fuel prices. In a global

context marked by migratory crises, such as in Afghanistan, the efforts made by IOM to implement the Global Compact and to provide urgent assistance to persons in need of protection were welcome.

18. Member States also addressed the issue of budget reform, the ultimate aim of which was to lay the foundations for a stronger IOM. IOM did incredible work, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability in its response to increasingly complex crises. It had repeatedly shown its strength and value, providing vital humanitarian assistance to people in need and Member States. When considering how best to support IOM so that it could continue providing value for its membership, meet the demands of tomorrow and address emerging challenges, a key factor was strengthening the Organization's core structure and ensuring that it had the resources it needed to respond flexibly to challenges and prioritize key strategic initiatives. All countries of origin, destination and transit should live up to their commitments in that regard. Furthermore, as one representative pointed out, IOM received less unearmarked funding than any other international organization; all Member States were encouraged to increase their voluntary contributions.

19. Several representatives and one regional group welcomed the progress made to implement the Internal Governance Framework and develop the Strategic Results Framework. One representative asked how much additional funding was required to finalize the new enterprise resources planning system and what the time frame was for roll-out of the Strategic Results Framework. Another looked forward to seeing the latter's finalized indicators and the part relating to organizational effectiveness. With regard to the internal justice system, one Member State commended the Office of the Inspector General for having reduced the backlog of cases pending investigation but emphasized that more must be done to eliminate impunity.

20. One representative, referring to the assertion that IOM was increasingly working with United Nations partners to maximize alignment with United Nations reporting systems and requirements, asked whether the Administration applied the methodologies used by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to calculate efficiencies. Referring to the Administration's efforts to strengthen existing business practices by introducing various training platforms, he asked whether that strategy had already borne fruit in terms of preventing cases of fraud. Lastly, with reference to workstream 4 of the Internal Governance Framework (internal justice), he asked what the time limits were for reviewing cases, how long on average it took to resolve a case and whether there had been any change in that numerical indicator.

21. Responding to Member States' comments and questions, the Director General said that the total cost of the enterprise resources planning system had been estimated at USD 55 million, of which roughly USD 25 million had been secured in 2021 and 2022, leaving about USD 30 million to be raised for 2023 and 2024. The Administration was working on the premise that the Migration Resource Allocation Committee would allocate approximately USD 10 million (around 30 per cent of unearmarked voluntary contributions) to the Internal Governance Framework and hence to the enterprise resource planning system, and that another USD 10 million would be drawn down from the OSI reserve. He was optimistic that the remaining USD 10 million would be provided by the Member States and that the new system would be rolled out in the first half of 2024.

22. IOM currently participated in all aspects of the United Nations system, with the exception of the Joint Inspection Unit and the International Civil Service Commission. It nevertheless worked closely with both those bodies, notably on the assessment scale for assessed contributions. It was a member of the United Nations country team in 131 countries and of the Core Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. As of the current planning cycle, all IOM data concerning development policy were not just fully aligned with United Nations standards and criteria, they were fully integrated into United Nations quadrennial comprehensive policy review reporting mechanisms.

The Administration used the same methodology as the United Nations to calculate efficiencies, and was in fact the current co-chair, along with UNICEF, of the working group on efficiencies.

23. He shared the Member States' concern about mounting xenophobia and discriminatory attitudes towards migrants. It was paradoxical that this was occurring at a time when the pandemic had shown that many migrants were essential workers who played a vital part in pandemic response. IOM was at the forefront of action to counter such attitudes, maintaining, for example, that there should be no discrimination on the basis of nationality, religion, legal status or skin colour in the assistance provided for the 266,000 third-country nationals who had fled Ukraine during the current conflict. The narrative on migrants was nonetheless a matter of national politics, and national governments had to be mobilized to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia. IOM remained committed to engaging with all Member States on that sensitive issue.

24. One Member State exercised its right of reply in response to the statement made by one regional group and one Member State during the discussion. The regional group and the Member State concerned thereafter exercised their right to respond to the right of reply.

25. The Standing Committee took note of the information provided by the Director General in his presentation and adopted Resolution No. 30 of 28 June 2022 on the Annual Report for 2021

#### **Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2021**

26. The Standing Committee had before it the Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2021 (C/113/3), the related draft resolution (S/30/L/2), the Statement of the External Auditor to the Thirtieth Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance on the financial operations of the International Organization for Migration for the 2021 financial year (S/30/9/Rev.1), and the Report of the External Auditor to the 113th Session of the Council of the International Organization for Migration for the financial year 2021 (S/30/CRP/1).

27. Drawing Member States' attention to the main points of document C/113/3 in a slide presentation, the Administration noted that the External Auditor had once again finalized the audit while working remotely. The External Auditor had issued an unqualified opinion on the Financial Report, attesting to the fact that the Organization was in full compliance with the IOM Financial Regulations, IPSAS and all reporting requirements. The observations and recommendations made by the External Auditor would be tackled over the course of the year, and progress made would be reported at the Thirty-first Session of the Standing Committee.

28. Total expenditure in 2021 had amounted to a record-breaking USD 2.5 billion, while total revenue, including voluntary contributions and deferred revenue, had totalled about USD 3.9 billion. The surplus had been carried forward to 2022 to continue activities being implemented in 2021. The low level of the Administrative Part of the Budget, in comparison to expenditure incurred, represented a gap in the funding structure and gave rise to significant risks for IOM. Although the Administrative Part of the Budget had ended the year with a small surplus, the increase in the provision for doubtful receivables resulting from delayed payment of outstanding contributions had resulted in an overall deficit of CHF 6.6 million.

29. Under the Operational Part of the Budget, expenditure was spread across all service areas and all regions. The offices with the highest levels of expenditure had changed little in 2021 compared with 2020; they were located in countries with a high volume of humanitarian and emergency response activities.

30. Overall, the Organization was in a strong financial position, with significant assets in cash and cash equivalents and short-term investments providing the liquidity needed to finance its activities. As a result of its innovative handling of the challenges associated with those kinds of assets, the Treasury Division had received an Adam Smith Award. Improvements in the Organization's financial position included the increased value of its properties and the value of its IT assets. Liabilities had increased by approximately 5.5 per cent owing to the receipt of contributions from donors in advance of delivery and employee benefit liabilities. Although employee benefit liabilities under the Operational Part of the Budget were adequately covered by a reserve, there was a level of exposure under the Administrative Part of the Budget where terminal emolument costs were covered on a yearly basis. Nonetheless, full terminal emolument coverage was in place for roughly 80 per cent of staff members.

31. Excess OSI of USD 8.5 million had been transferred to the OSI reserve, resulting in a total reserve of USD 65.8 million. Given the requirement to retain a sum equivalent to 1 per cent of total expenditure in that reserve, the amount available for allocation was USD 44 million. Two items remained outstanding as contingent liabilities, both of which related to ongoing legal cases. In addition to the financial details provided in the report, a list had been provided of services in kind received from governments, donors, implementing partners and service providers.

32. In the absence of the External Auditor, who was unable to attend the meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, the Standing Committee agreed that Member States wishing to comment on the Statement of the External Auditor (document S/30/9/Rev.1) would do so in writing.

33. In reply to a question from one representative, the Administration said that the Administrative Part of the Budget was denominated in Swiss francs since a significant proportion thereof was spent in Geneva. Although Member States were invoiced in Swiss francs and monies received from Member States were converted into Swiss francs, information was provided in the Financial Report in United States dollars in order to provide a full overview of expenditure in a single currency.

34. The Standing Committee adopted Resolution No. 28 of 23 June 2022 on the Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2021.

#### **Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2022**

35. The Standing Committee had before it the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2022 (S/30/5) and the related draft resolution (S/30/L/3).

36. The Administration supplemented its introduction of the first revision to the Programme and Budget for 2022 with a slide presentation. In line with Council Resolution No. 1390 of 24 November 2020, it proposed to allocate the increase of around CHF 443,000 in the Administration Part of the Budget resulting from the surplus recorded in 2020 to cover costs related to staff development and learning. Furthermore, the increase in the level of activities under the Operational Part of the Budget had led to a USD 6 million increase in projected OSI, which the Administration proposed to allocate to the increased costs of IOM's participation in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and mission security costs arising as a result of the deteriorating security situation in certain countries. In addition, the Administration proposed to draw down USD 8 million from the OSI reserve to cover costs related to the Business Transformation initiative, and to enhance cybersecurity, requirements which a recent IT security audit had shown were not being met satisfactorily.

37. The Operational Part of the Budget had increased about 80 per cent since the presentation of the original budget, to almost USD 2.2 billion. The revised figures reflected only activities for which agreements had been signed and funds had been confirmed. Activities had increased across all regions

and in all service areas. The most significant growth had been experienced in Africa, where IOM provided humanitarian assistance and carried out stabilization initiatives, the Middle East, where it provided support in humanitarian crises, and Latin America and the Caribbean, where it provided humanitarian assistance to communities affected by the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

38. In the ensuing discussion, one regional group and one Member State expressed support for the Administration's proposals related to the increase in the Administrative Part of the Budget, the drawdown from the OSI reserve and the additional OSI. The regional group called for Member States' national priorities to be taken into account by ensuring their participation in all stages of programme design and implementation, and noted that increased unearmarked voluntary contributions from donors would help the Organization conduct its work in ever-changing circumstances.

39. One representative requested further information on how the increase in the Administrative Part of the Budget would be spent. Given that Article 4.4 of IOM's Financial Regulations indicated that any surplus should be returned to Member States and bearing in mind the practice at other United Nations bodies of lowering the level of forthcoming assessed contributions accordingly, he questioned the validity of the approach outlined by the Administration.

40. Another representative noted that the request for a mid-year increase in the target set for OSI income represented a new approach. With regard to the use of OSI to cover increased security costs, a separate staff security reserve had been set up by Member States for that purpose but had recently been combined with the OSI reserve at the Administration's request.

41. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela questioned the use in document S/30/5 of the term "refugees" in relation to Venezuelans, noting that rigour in data collection called for the proper classification of migrants. He requested information on the criteria required to receive assistance for repatriation processes, since his Government was awaiting a response to its request for IOM support to implement a repatriation plan for returned economic migrants.

42. Another delegate queried whether, as a country of transit, there should be a specific allocation in the budget for the management of his country's borders.

43. The Administration, responding to comments and questions, said that it was standard practice to ensure that beneficiary Member States were involved in programme design and implementation, alongside donors. The Administration's proposal for the increase in the 2022 Administrative Part of the Budget resulting from the 2020 surplus was in line with Council Resolution No. 1390, which stipulated that a surplus above 1 per cent of the approved Administrative Part of the Budget should be returned to Member States through a proportional reduction of assessed contributions; a surplus that was equal to or less than 1 per cent of the approved Administrative Part of the Budget should be used to supplement the Administrative Part of the Budget in the second year following the year in which the surplus had been generated. Once approved, the exact details of how that sum would be used would be determined by the Training Advisory Committee, which would include development for Chiefs of Mission, the purchase of additional coaching licences for mentoring programmes and group language training.

44. Regarding the use of OSI for core requirements, the Administration recalled that Member States had approved the consolidation of the general overhead and staff security overhead in 2020, in order to enhance management and oversight. Staff security costs had grown in line with the Organization's expansion and would be included in the Programme and Budget in subsequent years. Since all the funding set out in the Programme and Budget for 2022 was already earmarked for specific

projects, requests to manage borders as part of migration regulation should be discussed with the Administration, with a view to developing a project and raising the necessary funds, if appropriate.

45. The Director General pointed out that mixed flows were increasingly a feature of human mobility and that there could be multiple reasons for displacement. IOM and UNHCR had set up an inter-agency coordination platform for work related to displaced Venezuelans in Latin America, and the terms used and agreed by the two organizations referred to the multiform reality of displacement. Refugees were included in references to mixed flows but IOM had not committed to identifying the numbers of different kinds of migrants; rather the focus was on providing support to displaced persons and their host communities.

46. The Standing Committee adopted Resolution No. 29 of 24 June 2022 on the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2022.

### **Assessment scale for 2023**

47. The Administration introduced the document entitled Proposed adjustment to the IOM assessment scale for 2023 (S/30/3) and noted that the IOM assessment scale was fully equated to that of the United Nations; however, owing to the timing of the issuance of the United Nations assessment scale, there was a one-year time lag in the application of the new scale at IOM. The United Nations scale for 2022 would therefore be applied at IOM in 2023.

48. The Standing Committee approved the IOM assessment scale for 2023, as illustrated in the annex to document S/30/3.

### **Report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Budget Reform**

49. The agenda item on budget reform was considered on 23, 24 and 28 June 2022.

50. The Chairperson, speaking in her capacity as the Chairperson of the Working Group on Budget Reform, thanked Member States for their constructive efforts in recent weeks to reach consensus on how best to secure predictable, sustainable financing for IOM. In recent years, the Organization had grown rapidly in response to the increased demand for its services generated by climate change, natural disasters, armed conflicts and socioeconomic crises, yet its core funding structure lacked the resources needed to support that growth. The funding crisis had been further exacerbated by inflation and other economic pressures. Without adequate financial means to fulfil its mandate, IOM would be unable to respond to the demands of Member States and would have to reduce its global footprint. Many solutions had been examined with a view to securing the additional USD 75 million requested by the Administration; although many Member States were facing acute economic pressures, most agreed that at least part of the budget increase would have to be funded through an increase in assessed contributions.

51. She drew attention to the draft resolution contained in document S/30/L/4, which had been developed with a view to balancing the needs of the Organization and the concerns expressed by Member States. The delegation of China had submitted a proposed amendment to the draft resolution, whereby a more modest increase in assessed contributions would be offset by a greater reliance on voluntary contributions, and that increase would be staggered over a period of five instead of three years. She urged Member States to show flexibility in order to reach a consensus on the way forward.

52. The other members of the Council Bureau agreed that it was vital to reach consensus on providing sustainable and predictable additional funding to IOM and called for a constructive decision that would lead to firm progress on budget reform. All Member States faced economic difficulties, but

a failure to fund IOM adequately would have severe consequences for its capacity to fulfil its mandate. The draft resolution made provision for a flexible approach in the payment of assessed contributions where necessary, and represented the best compromise based on the discussions thus far.

53. The Director General said that the draft resolution represented a modest proposal made in full transparency based on the Organization's needs and current funding gaps. The funding request had been justified in great detail and would enable IOM to strengthen management and oversight, improve its capacity to deliver services to Member States and – most crucially – migrants, and cope with new challenges. The purpose of reform was clear: additional resources were vital to build a sustainable core structure and ensure that the Organization could uphold its responsibilities as a member of the United Nations system. Although the Administration was open to funding options combining assessed and voluntary contributions with other sources of potential income, and would also consider a phased introduction of increases in recognition of the economic difficulties faced by Member States, it believed that assessed contributions were the most secure way to achieve the predictability and sustainability required. The draft resolution took into account the concerns expressed by Member States and contained provisions that would allow flexibility in the application of budget reform; he urged Member States to make a final effort to reach consensus on the matter.

54. During the ensuing discussion, strong support was expressed for budget reform, with Member States highlighting the vital work and invaluable leadership of IOM in promoting orderly and humane migration management. They welcomed the extensive efforts undertaken thus far during both formal and informal consultations to develop a proposal acceptable to all parties, recognizing that any decision should be taken by consensus, rather than put to a vote.

55. Many Member States welcomed the draft resolution, observing that it represented a good compromise that incorporated the concerns expressed during previous discussions, while a significant number of others said that they were willing to join the emerging consensus on the text. It was generally acknowledged that the challenging financial context worldwide would make it hard for certain Member States to support an increase in assessed contributions; several speakers welcomed the provisions of the draft resolution that aimed to address those concerns, notably the incremental increase in payments, the possibility of tailored solutions for Member States in difficulty, and the measures to prevent the undue loss of voting rights. Some delegates also stressed the importance of providing additional support for Member States hosting large numbers of migrants.

56. Several speakers expressed reservations regarding the draft resolution. Some commented that their Governments would find it difficult to commit to an increase in assessed contributions at the present time, while others observed that the current draft did not respond to all the concerns raised. Several other speakers said that they were willing to continue discussions in the interest of reaching consensus.

57. The representative of one Member State said that, although the draft resolution represented a significant step forward, it was not yet ready for adoption by the Standing Committee. Global economic conditions were not currently conducive to any increase in assessed contributions, and the financial consequences of the proposed amendment to the definition of the core structure were not yet clear. Although his Government was committed to strengthening IOM, it believed that more in-depth discussions were needed in order to avoid a superficial budget reform that would raise additional issues in the future.

58. The representative of China reiterated his strong support for budget reform, agreeing that the Administration should be provided with additional funds of USD 75 million as requested. However, he would prefer discussions to continue on the basis of option 2 in document WG/BR/2022/1, whereby

the additional funding would be provided through an even split between assessed contributions and un earmarked voluntary contributions, and had submitted the proposed amendment on that basis.

59. Several Member States said that they were willing to consider the proposed amendment, while others expressed a strong objection to the proposal, highlighting the unreliable nature of voluntary contributions and noting that option 2 had been ruled out as unviable during earlier discussions.

60. Another Member State proposed several minor adjustments to the draft resolution, notably to increase to five years the length of the transitional period over which the increase to the Administrative Part of the Budget would be applied.

61. Following further informal consultations and negotiations, the Standing Committee reconvened on 28 June 2022 to consider the revised draft resolution prepared in the interval and contained in document S/30/L/4/Rev.1. It also had before it a new proposal subsequently submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation.

62. The majority of speakers expressed support for the revised draft resolution, reiterating the importance of taking a decision now in order to build a stronger IOM in the future. Several others said that they continued to have reservations about the proposed increase in assessed contributions, but would join the consensus.

63. The representative of Brazil, drawing attention to the ongoing negative economic situation, said that his Government wished to dissociate itself from the revised draft resolution as it was not in a position to accept an increase in assessed contributions.

64. The representative of the Russian Federation said that, although progress had been made, the revised draft resolution still contained serious flaws. A drastic increase in assessed contributions represented a burden for Member States given the current global economic situation. The tailored solution and potential exemptions to the application of Article 4 of the IOM Constitution that had been proposed in response to those economic concerns was a threat to the principle of shared responsibility among Member States. In addition, no provision had been made for the periodic review of increases to the Administrative Part of the Budget – such a measure would have allowed Member States to discuss the efficiency of the reform as it progressed. He also objected to the way in which priorities had been set for the reform; some unnecessary staff posts had been created, while the financial implications of participation in the International Civil Service Commission and the Joint Inspection Unit should be included in budget discussions based on the ongoing deliberations of the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities. Lastly, it was not clear exactly how the proposed USD 60 million increase in the Administrative Part of the Budget would be spent. His delegation had therefore submitted a proposal that would allow time for more in-depth examination of the budget reform.

65. The Chairperson clarified that the revised draft resolution would be addressed first, as proposals were considered in the order in which they were submitted in accordance with Rule 44 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

66. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance proceeded with the adoption of Resolution No. 31 of 28 June 2022 on investing in the core structure of IOM.

67. The Director General commended the Standing Committee for taking a decision that would enable the Organization to undertake the necessary reforms and serve beneficiaries more effectively. Acknowledging the burden that the increased financial obligations would place on some Member

States, he assured all delegations that implementation of the budget reform would continue in full transparency, in close consultation with all Member States.

68. The Chairperson recalled that Rule 44 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council allowed the Standing Committee to decide whether it was necessary to consider the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation and noted that the adoption of Resolution No. 31 implied that it was not necessary to consider the proposal, which would have provided for continuation of the discussion on budget reform. She then invited those delegations that wished to do so to make statements for the record.

69. The representative of the Russian Federation stated that he had not explicitly said that his country dissociated from consensus and requested that that point should be reflected in the record.

70. The representative of Tunisia expressed reservations on Resolution No. 31, stating that her Government was opposed to any increase in assessed contributions due to financial constraints.

71. The representative of Italy said that his Government had joined the consensus on Resolution No. 31 but required additional time to assess its full financial impact.

72. The representative of Hungary said that her Government had joined the consensus on Resolution No. 31 despite reservations regarding its financial implications, which it would seek to discuss further with the Organization on a bilateral basis.

#### **Update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building**

73. The Administration delivered a slide presentation introducing document S/30/4, entitled Plans for the IOM Headquarters building: update 6. The Director General's study loan application to the Government of Switzerland had been approved in December 2021 and the contract had been signed in March 2022. The study loan would cover administrative and preparatory activities up to the end of 2025, including preparation of the documents required to request the construction loan of CHF 66.3 million. The international architectural competition to select a final project design for the new Headquarters building had resulted in the anonymous submission of 14 project proposals, with the jury scheduled to choose a winning entry on 29 June 2022. The development of the project had involved consultation with stakeholders and end users, including the Staff Consultation Group, which had considered best practices and visited reference office buildings. Consideration had also been given to the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic on the adaptation of office spaces and the need to accommodate flexible working. A pilot of new furniture and workspaces had been launched at newly rented office premises. Regular exchanges on the project took place with the host Government, and a working group comprised of representatives of the host State's Building Foundation for International Organizations, UNESCO and IOM had been established to discuss operational and technical issues.

74. One representative asked whether a schedule had been set for the project and how the Administration had assessed the longlisted architectural firms against the five main criteria outlined in the report. He wished to know whether the changes to employees' terms of service required by flexible working were legally permitted and whether consideration had been given to the effects and staff experience of new working configurations.

75. Another representative wished to know whether provision had been made in the project budget for the impact of inflation on costs. He urged the Administration and others involved in the planning process to confirm that the design would comply with the accessibility criteria set out by the Joint Inspection Unit and in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

76. Two other representatives requested more details on disability inclusion in future updates on the new Headquarters building. One of them asked at what stage of the project disability inclusion would be considered. She expressed appreciation for the diversity among the architectural firms invited to enter the competition and for the inclusion of staff members and different stakeholders on the competition's jury, and asked whether any persons with disabilities were part of the Staff Consultation Group. Accessibility and universal design should be included in pilot testing of future workplace scenarios and persons with disabilities should be considered as potential users. The other representative welcomed the emphasis placed so far on inclusion and innovation, regional diversity and environmental impact, and the recognition that the workplace had evolved in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

77. Responding to comments, the Administration noted that it was closely following developments on the topic of disability inclusion, which had been discussed at length, and was working with experts and seeking the views of staff members who had close knowledge of the issues. The project was at a general stage of development and issues such as accessibility, integration and the environment would be addressed in due course. In some cases, the solutions implemented by other international organizations would be employed. The need to accommodate post-pandemic measures in the workplace was being considered and the Standing Committee would be provided with more details on that issue at its Thirty-first Session, alongside the presentation of the winning architect and project design.

78. The final project budget of CHF 72 million included a buffer for unforeseen events, such as inflation. Throughout the project, choices would be monitored with the budget in mind. With regard to flexible workspaces, pilot testing and visits to existing spaces were ongoing and the Standing Committee would be kept informed of developments. Longlisted architects had been assessed against the criteria set by a committee of representatives from the Administration and an independent specialist. The related assessment notes would be made available on request. The Organization would request the construction loan from the host State by the end of 2023, with expenditure starting by the beginning of 2026. Construction should be completed by 2028, with the Administration moving into the new building in early 2029. Plans were being drawn up for the temporary relocation of staff members to other premises by the end of 2025.

79. In addition, the Administration noted that the External Auditor provided oversight of the project. Member States could therefore be assured that there would be independent review and reporting of progress.

80. The Standing Committee took note of document S/30/4.

### **Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership**

#### **(a) The criticality of humanitarian access to assistance and protection work**

81. The Deputy Director General for Operations underscored the importance of continued commitment to humanitarian principles in the context of increasing fragility and violence worldwide. It was vital to guarantee unimpeded humanitarian assistance in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law. A key element was trust, which needed to be established between humanitarian workers, parties to conflict, the population concerned and donors. However, the growing politicization of humanitarian aid and access was placing relief agencies under great pressure, to the detriment of civilian populations. Renewed efforts were needed to strengthen coordination and provide assistance and protection to those in need.

82. The Administration introduced the document entitled *The criticality of humanitarian access to assistance and protection work (S/30/7)*, which it supplemented with a slide presentation. In its work to assist people affected by crisis, IOM was guided by the principles of independence, humanity, neutrality and impartiality, working closely with populations in order to build trust. Such efforts had become more challenging in recent years as the humanitarian space had shrunk and access had become more difficult to obtain during complex emergencies. Barriers to access were political rather than geographical and included bureaucratic constraints, logistical impediments and security challenges. Attempts to influence operations also seriously imperilled humanitarian activities as they threatened the principles of independence and impartiality, putting personnel at risk. More than ever, the protection of humanitarian space through unimpeded access and the protection of humanitarian workers needed to be guaranteed.

83. Overcoming access constraints required a balance between principles and pragmatism. IOM sought to build trust by engaging with local and national authorities and other key stakeholders about its humanitarian work, values and modalities to ensure transparency and build acceptance. It was also building staff negotiation capacities, sharing information and promoting evidence-based decisions as part of a coordinated inter-agency approach. A dedicated working group on sanctions had been established at Headquarters and served as a valuable mechanism for examining the impact of sanctions and counter-terrorism measures on the delivery of humanitarian aid; the Organization welcomed the more lenient stance on sanctions adopted by some countries in recent years and stressed the need to establish exceptions for humanitarian purposes. More broadly, IOM remained committed to supporting Member State efforts to assist crisis-affected populations based on principled humanitarian access.

84. Several Member States and two regional groups agreed that humanitarian access should be guaranteed in line with the principles of independence, humanity, neutrality and impartiality, and commended IOM's work to ensure that vulnerable populations could receive assistance. Particular appreciation was expressed for IOM's efforts to build staff capacity in humanitarian access and negotiation, including through the development of an internal community of practice, although one Member State stressed the need for coordination to avoid any duplication of work. The Organization's engagement in inter-agency coordination mechanisms was also welcomed, with one regional group calling for further exchanges of best practice and joint staff capacity-building with other United Nations agencies.

85. The same regional group and several Member States called on parties to conflict to allow safe, unhindered humanitarian access to people in need, with two Member States further stressing that, under international humanitarian law, States held primary responsibility for protecting civilian populations. In highlighting current cases of restrictions on humanitarian access, several speakers drew attention to the plight of civilian populations affected by the conflict in Ukraine, while another highlighted humanitarian access issues in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. One Member State further called for IOM assistance to secure the safe return of Ukrainian civilians deported to the Russian Federation.

86. One delegate requested further information about IOM's policies and practices to manage its commitment to humanitarian principles in locations where it was engaged in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian operations. Specifically, when a crisis arose, did IOM undertake a country-level reassessment of its non-humanitarian activities, and did it work with the humanitarian country team or other coordinating entity to ensure that any activities not explicitly humanitarian in nature complemented its humanitarian mission? She also wished to know how the Organization tracked and addressed misinformation about humanitarian activities, and whether such work formed part of the country-level risk analysis.

87. One Member State exercised its right of reply in response to the statement of another Member State, which thereafter also exercised its right to respond to the right of reply.

88. Responding to comments, the Administration welcomed Member States' ongoing commitment to securing and improving humanitarian access in conflict settings. IOM recognized the complexity of activities in that area and always sought to ensure that its work complemented that of other agencies, especially those within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Further details regarding the specific approaches and policies applied by the Organization could be found in its Migration Crisis Operational Framework, supplemented by the 2021 addendum.

**(b) Enabling human mobility as part of resilient pandemic preparedness and response actions**

89. The Deputy Director General for Operations, referring to the high-level segment organized by the Administration during the 112th Session of the Council on the impact of COVID-19 on borders, migration and mobility, said that several of the many Member States that had taken the floor at that time had called for IOM to strengthen its coordination with WHO, including in the context of the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations for a new international treaty on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, while remaining aligned with the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Pursuant to the Director General's pledge to host further discussions on the topic, IOM and the Migration Policy Institute had organized a side event at the first International Migration Review Forum (May 2022), in partnership with WHO and governmental and non-governmental partners. At the event, Member States had reiterated the need to chart a course balancing health security with predictable cross-border mobility, to harmonize approaches and to build up the digital and physical infrastructure of border management and invest in capacity-building. They had also voiced support for the establishment of a Member State-led group to discuss inclusive and adaptable mobility and pandemic preparedness, to complement the ongoing review of the International Health Regulations (2005) and negotiations of the new international treaty. The event had highlighted that, without that common endeavour, there was a growing danger that future migration would become even more fragmented, which risked widening inequalities, hampering access to safe and regular migration, and stalling economic and social development.

90. The Administration introduced the document entitled *Enabling human mobility as part of resilient pandemic preparedness and response (S/30/8)*, the aim of which was to present the context and selected recommendations for IOM actions to support States in avoiding the widespread global disruptions to cross-border mobility and socioeconomic instability that had occurred during the current pandemic, should similar events occur in the future.

91. In terms of cross-border mobility, the current situation was a matter of concern for several reasons: the world appeared to be moving towards a two-speed recovery from the pandemic; coordination and standardization between States, and sometimes between the different authorities of a State, were limited; and gaps persisted in cross-border sharing of data and technological solutions.

92. The document contained various recommendations, one of which was the establishment of a time-limited ad hoc working group on migration and health to assess the interrelationship between cross-border population flows and tools such as the WHO operational frameworks and guidance documents on travel, and the ICAO Health Master List. The paper also proposed the development of clear, equitable, streamlined and future-focused principles for managing global travel during future pandemics, anticipating potential collateral impacts, for consideration as part of the ongoing intergovernmental deliberations led by WHO for a new pandemic treaty.

93. The ad hoc working group would not duplicate existing coordination mechanisms or be a binding tool. Instead, it would play a pivotal role in addressing concerns from different perspectives.

Standing participants might include United Nations agencies such as WHO, ICAO, WTO and IMO, with others invited on demand. Furthermore, relevant civil society organizations and policy think tanks would be asked to provide data and analysis to support the synthesis of principles and ensure a migrant-centred approach.

94. Once established, the ad hoc working group would serve as a resource enabling governments and the United Nations family to strengthen mobility governance. It would support fulfilment of the commitment to accelerate efforts to integrate public health concerns into migration policies set out in the Progress Declaration adopted the previous month by the International Migration Review Forum, while advancing the overarching purpose of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind.

95. Several representatives and one regional group applauded IOM's leadership in the field of pandemic preparedness and response, public health and mobility. IOM was commended for consistently advocating the inclusion of migrants in national vaccination plans, health and recovery responses, and other services, with a view to mitigating the impact of the pandemic while respecting national competencies. The Organization's efforts to collect and generate data were noted as key to the analysis and understanding of the lessons learned regarding mobility impacts during the pandemic.

96. One regional group underscored the importance of coordinated international efforts to provide protection and assistance to migrants in situations of vulnerability. The world was seemingly returning to normal, largely thanks to high vaccination rates in high-income countries, but COVID-19 would not be beaten until all adults and adolescents worldwide had access to life-saving vaccines. It was vital to address the vaccine equity gap that continued to affect migrants and host communities in low-income countries. The group called for the recommendations set out in the document to be implemented in line with the national framework in Member States and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

97. Another regional group agreed with the document's premise that, in order to enhance the certainty and predictability of cross-border mobility, public health and protection concerns had to be fully integrated, and capacity bolstered to manage entry and stay safely and equitably, in accordance with national competencies. The digital solutions used for that purpose should be designed bearing in mind comprehensive safeguards and data privacy standards.

98. Two representatives said that the COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the negative impact of excessive border restrictions and vaccine inequity on migrants. Health emergencies should not be used as an excuse to put in place restrictive border governance policies that left migrants stranded at borders or forced to leave the country. In order to restore migration to previous levels and reactivate the global economy, equitable and universal access should be guaranteed to all medicines, vaccines and medical supplies. IOM should continue coordinating with WHO and other stakeholders to that end.

99. Another representative underscored the importance of the One United Nations approach to respond effectively to both the primary and secondary effects of current and future crises.

100. One regional group expressed support for the inclusion of mobility considerations in the intergovernmental negotiations on the new international treaty on pandemic preparedness, prevention and response. One Member State nevertheless cautioned that the new international treaty should remain focused on issues directly related to pandemic preparedness, prevention and response; that focus should not be diluted by calls for additions to the treaty. For another Member State, the new international treaty would have to be flexible enough to take account of countries' varying

geographies: the pandemic response in a small island State would not be the same as in a landlocked country.

101. One representative said that effective migration management required stronger regional dialogue and coordination, including on health risks and border restrictions. Countries of origin, destination and transit had to work together to provide international protection to refugees and offer alternatives to those who were not refugees but still required protection, for example in cases of temporary labour, family reunification or humanitarian protection.

102. Another representative, emphasizing the importance of learning from the lessons of the past in order to be better placed to respond to future pandemics, listed six things that would make border measures less disruptive over a shorter period in another pandemic, namely a clear matrix for moving between different border settings, to provide predictability for people and businesses, while retaining the flexibility to react to epidemiological conditions; whole-of-government cross-jurisdictional cooperation; cooperation between government and industries, including airlines and airports, when adapting environments to public health responses; good vaccination uptake, so as to enable the shift from country-based to travel-based risk assessments and control measures; digital automated tools to process passenger information ahead of departure; and strong international partnerships and comparable capabilities at either end of the journey.

103. Member States expressed their willingness to participate in further discussions and initiatives on the matter. The proposed ad hoc working group would help ensure better coordinated and more predictable migration responses during pandemics. Two asked where a mechanism of that kind would be based, while another looked forward to having a separate, more in-depth discussion with IOM and national experts on the proposal.

104. The Administration thanked Member States for their interest in the establishment of an ad hoc working group. IOM would act as the group's convening or facilitating entity but would seek Member States' leadership. The group's deliberations would be informal and would complement other processes, such as the Support Group for Global Infectious Disease Response. It would feed information into ongoing intergovernmental or inter-agency processes, such as the WHO negotiations on the new international treaty.

105. The Administration proposed that it organize a follow-up webinar or meeting at which the Member States could discuss the recommendations made in the document in greater detail and decide where best to base the working group.

106. The Standing Committee took note of documents S/30/7 and S/30/8, and of the comments made by Member States.

#### **Report on the IOM Development Fund**

107. The Deputy Director General for Operations thanked Member States for their support for the IOM Development Fund. The projects supported by the Fund responded to the needs and priorities of Member States and were nationally owned and led initiatives in a wide range of areas, many of them in line with the commitments made under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In the previous year, many projects had been aimed at seeking innovative ways to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and there had been a steady rise in demand for projects that focused on climate change and human mobility.

108. The Administration introduced document S/30/6 (IOM Development Fund – Final report: 1 January to 31 December 2021), accompanied by a slide presentation. In 2021, approximately USD 16 million had been made available to support eligible Members States. The Administration

thanked the Governments of Austria and Belgium for their generous earmarked contributions to the Fund, and the Government of Italy for supporting a Junior Professional Officer position that was shared between the Fund and the Immigration and Border Management Division.

109. The projects approved during 2021 included a wide variety of innovative initiatives to contribute to achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Alongside high demand for projects on migration, environment and climate change, other areas most in demand for projects focused on immigration and border management, and labour migration. The COVID-19 pandemic had caused some delays in the implementation of projects but creative efforts had seen capacity development take place remotely; the implementation of many projects had accelerated in 2022 and some projects had proven instrumental in responding to the pandemic. In total, 41 projects had been completed in 2021. The projects had demonstrated an extensive history of working with government partners to develop, guide and implement migration policies across a variety of different contexts and needs. Several projects had leveraged IOM tools to develop capacities and completed projects had been highlighted by the media.

110. Two reviews had been carried out: one on gender and one on diaspora engagement. The Fund continued to use the IOM Gender Marker for all its projects. A 2021 review of projects focused on gender had considered a sample of projects that had been funded between 2017 and 2020. Despite encouraging results, much remained to be done to ensure further gender mainstreaming in projects. Work on knowledge management in 2021 had included evaluations and reviews that had identified lessons learned and best practices, and the drafting of a consolidated report with recommendations for project developers and managers, including on developing a theory of change in project proposals and making more detailed risk assessments.

111. The Standing Committee viewed a short film demonstrating the IOM Development Fund's work to address the challenges of migration, environment and climate change. The film showcased a project in Guinea that was working with communities to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change on lives and livelihoods.

112. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed their gratitude to the Fund for its work. Speaking on behalf of the African Group, one representative noted with appreciation the support for initiatives in 24 eligible African countries in 2021. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic made that support particularly valuable and several projects had been extended because of pandemic-related restrictions on movements. The alignment of projects with the principles of the Global Compact was particularly welcome, as were efforts to enhance gender equality through projects. The Group encouraged the Fund to implement the recommendations on building capacities in risk assessment and developing a theory of change.

113. Three representatives called for continued financing of the Fund, with one expressing particular support for projects relating to labour migration, migrants in situations of vulnerability and emergency response, and stating that there should be more equitable distribution of projects among thematic areas and across regions. The second representative noted the unique contribution of IOM to implementing projects on the ground that linked back to policy discussions at the global level, highlighting in particular the issues of displacement linked to climate change and water scarcity. She was keen to learn more about the involvement of IOM in preparations for the Twenty-seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2023 Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action. The third representative welcomed the focus on the climate change-induced needs of small island developing States.

114. One delegate expressed gratitude for the opening in 2017 of a national IOM office in his country. The presence of that office had helped his Government to implement projects supported by the Fund in a number of priority areas, most recently on data for migration policy and management. Another delegate emphasized her country's continued collaboration with IOM, despite the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on projects that would advance the human and labour rights of migrant workers and prevent their exploitation and abuse. A third delegate noted her Government's close cooperation with IOM on projects that covered a range of areas – most recently on leveraging the potential of human mobility in the context of climate change through diaspora engagement – and expressed satisfaction with the operation of the Fund, the results-based approach taken to its management and its regular reporting to Member States.

115. The Standing Committee took note of document S/30/6.

#### **Closure of the session**

116. The Chairperson declared the Thirtieth Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance closed on Tuesday, 28 June 2022, at 2.50 p.m.