

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

Thirty-first Session

REPORT OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

ON THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Geneva

1 and 2 November 2022

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IGF	Internal Governance Framework
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
JIU	United Nations Joint Inspection Unit
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
OECD DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSI	Operational Support Income
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE ON THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance met at the Centre International de Conférences Genève for its Thirty-first Session on 1 and 2 November 2022. The Session was chaired by Mr L.A. Gberie (Sierra Leone) and Ms F.E. Méndez Escobar (Mexico). Four meetings were held, with some participants following proceedings remotely.

2. The following Member States were represented:¹

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

3. The Member States agreed to a request made by the Permanent Representatives of the Delegation of the European Union and of Czechia, 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/31/1).

¹ The list of participants is contained in document S/31/14. 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/31/1 was adopted by the Standing Committee and subsequently issued as document S/31/15.

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

5. 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 2022) (C/113/5/Rev.1). The update reflected the additional contributions received since the Thirtieth Session of the Standing Committee. The total outstanding assessed contributions for 2021 and previous years and the assessed contributions still to be paid for 2022 amounted to CHF 31.7 million. As at 30 September 2022, 29 Member States had been subject to Article 4 of the IOM Constitution; of those, 17 had lost their right to vote. Document C/113/5/Rev.1 indicated that the receipt of payments from Guinea, Jamaica, Nicaragua, the Niger and Zambia had resulted in their removal from the list of countries subject to Article 4. A number of other Member States had also made payments to reduce their outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget. As such outstanding contributions affected the Organization's cash flow, Member States in arrears should be encouraged to promptly pay their contributions or negotiate payment plans.

6. The Standing Committee took note of the contents of document C/113/5/Rev.1 and recommended that the Council endorse it; 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.

Election of the Chairperson of the Council

7. The Standing Committee elected Ms Francisca E. Méndez Escobar as Chairperson of the Council.

Presentation by the Director General

8. The Director General, welcoming participants to the Standing Committee's Thirty-first Session, delivered the statement contained in extenso in document S/31/17, in which he highlighted the ever-greater need for cooperation in the face of unprecedented economic instability. Progress was being made to implement the budget reforms approved earlier in the year, but they would take time to bear fruit.

9. In the ensuing discussion, support was generally expressed for IOM's response to evolving global challenges, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, and for its role in coordinating migration-related work within the United Nations system and strengthening State-based migration management. The representative of a regional group called on donors to support IOM financially, in particular through unearmarked core contributions. Some representatives expressed concern at the impact of the situation in Ukraine on the global food crisis and the repercussions for migrants and internally displaced persons, while another commended IOM's efforts to monitor and map internal displacement in Ukraine.

10. Numerous representatives welcomed the progress made in implementing various aspects of the IGF Workplan and called for continued monitoring of the process. One representative wished to know which areas of the workplan faced challenges, what details would be contained in the progress report to be provided in 2022 and what actions were proposed for after the reform was complete.

11. While the planned increase in assessed contributions was welcomed, one representative called for understanding of the financial challenges that States were facing. All funding must be used as efficiently as possible, and Member States should be given regular updates. Another representative welcomed the progressive incorporation of the costs of Chiefs of Mission and Resource Management Officer positions into the core budget, while a third called for stable funding and for the efficient use of resources to finance the increase in operating costs of the enterprise resource planning system.

12. One representative asked whether the Administration planned to implement IPSAS 41 – Financial Instruments and whether it had consulted other United Nations organizations on the subject of financial reporting processes. He encouraged the Administration to request the External Auditor to conduct independent reviews of the Business Transformation initiative and of IOM's risk management maturity level. A note of caution was sounded by another representative regarding the need to ensure that all eFiling systems were user-friendly. While improvements to the system of online purchases were noted, a third representative encouraged IOM to procure local goods and services in order to support local markets and industries and sustainably discourage dependence. A further representative highlighted the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce in overcoming current global challenges. Another, while welcoming the establishment of the Gender and Diversity Unit, asked how the Unit contributed in practice to project implementation. Support was expressed by several representatives for the second MOPAN assessment.

13. While welcoming the reduction in the backlog of cases handled by the Office of the Inspector General, one representative wondered what structural measures had been taken to prevent misconduct, especially in the light of the rising number of allegations. Another representative asked how, in practice, the misconduct platform was being supplemented to provide sufficient capacity to handle the imposition and management of disciplinary measures. A third representative commended the launch of the platform in multiple languages, while a fourth emphasized the importance of extending use of the platform to volunteers and interns.

14. The improvements in risk management within the Organization were widely welcomed. Two representatives specifically called for sufficient resources to be allocated to risk management; they also posed questions about how enhanced risk information would be used in decision-making and governance, whether the use of risk registers and clear risk statements was being monitored, and when all high-risk operations were expected to be covered by risk registers.

15. The representative of Colombia reported that diplomatic relations had been re-established between his country and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the border reopened to official migration. Migrants needed to be given sufficient information about the risks of crossing borders at points without adequate infrastructure. He encouraged IOM to continue supporting the international donors conference planned for early 2023, which was essential for mobilizing the resources required to implement migration response plans.

16. Responding to the points and questions raised, the Director General said that a risk appetite statement was being finalized. To increase capacity for conducting risk assessments, training was being provided to Chiefs of Mission, Resource Management Officers and project managers in offices around the world. The main areas of risk were cybersecurity, geopolitical challenges, inflation, data protection, third-party contractors, and sexual exploitation and abuse, each of which required a different mitigation response. An informal briefing on risk policy would be held for interested parties.

17. The Administration remained committed to fully implementing the Business Transformation initiative by the first quarter of 2024, within the budget of USD 56 million. Funding had been drawn from unearmarked contributions and from the OSI reserve and was sufficient to cover the work planned for 2023. The enterprise resource planning system would document the management of

human resources, supply chains and assets, among other things. The cost of running the enterprise resource planning system was higher than initially anticipated because IOM had grown significantly; the increase would hopefully be offset by the gains achieved through efficiencies, automation and improved delivery.

18. Further analysis was required to identify the root causes of the rise in the number of complaints of misconduct from staff members. A positive interpretation was that staff members' trust in the internal justice system had grown. With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, the Administration was aware of the areas that required further prevention efforts and of the need to improve support and compensation for victims.

19. Welcoming the resumption of official migration between Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, he emphasized that a comprehensive register of displaced persons in Colombia was required to prevent human trafficking and exploitation. Given the anticipated growth in migratory movements, he agreed that more needed to be done to support Member States in migration management through data collection and capacity-building.

20. The Standing Committee took note of the statement of the Director General (S/31/17) and of documents S/31/INF/1 and S/31/5.

Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2022

21. The Standing Committee had before it a document entitled Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2022 (C/113/8) for consideration in conjunction with the Programme and Budget for 2022 (C/112/6/Rev.1) and the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2022 (S/30/5).

22. The Administration reported that the Administrative Part of the Budget remained unchanged at CHF 54,030,308, as approved in document S/30/5. The Operational Part of the Budget had increased from USD 2.2 billion to USD 2.9 billion and OSI had remained at USD 142 million. Document C/113/8 included a table that provided a geographical breakdown of the Operational Part of the Budget. Based on activities reported so far, it was likely that the estimated amount of OSI for 2022 would be exceeded by the end of the year and any surplus would be transferred to the OSI reserve. The Administration had drawn down USD 5 million from the reserve to invest in and implement a private sector strategy and to create a Goodwill Ambassadors programme as stipulated by Member States in the Standing Committee Resolution No. 31 of 28 June 2022 on investing in the core structure of IOM.

23. One representative, speaking on behalf of a regional group, expressed support for the drawdown from the OSI reserve, which was in line with Council Resolution No. 1390 of 24 November 2020 on budget regulations and practices and Standing Committee Resolution No. 31. The group commended IOM for its continuing efforts to support people in need of humanitarian assistance worldwide.

24. One Member State representative requested that future summary updates include figures for the amount of OSI generated to date and the balance of the OSI reserve. Another, welcoming the priority attached to the budget reform and Business Transformation processes, encouraged Member States to increase voluntary contributions to support the Organization's vital activities in assisting vulnerable groups, migrants and internally displaced persons. A third requested additional information about the specific situations, programmes and response initiatives that accounted for the increased allocation to Movement, Emergency and Post-crisis Programming and asked whether the Organization was prepared for similar occurrences in the future. He urged donors to increase the level of unearmarked contributions they provided, so as to give the Organization maximum flexibility, and encouraged Member States to make voluntary contributions to IOM and other related funds. A fourth

Member State representative welcomed the increase in the Operational Part of the Budget and encouraged the Organization to continue assessing and responding to emerging challenges and supporting countries, particularly the least developed countries, in their efforts to adequately meet their responsibilities and obligations.

25. The Administration, responding to questions, said that the OSI reserve balance carried forward from 2021 had been around USD 65.8 million. The Organization was required to keep a minimum of 1 per cent of the previous year's expenditure in the reserve, amounting to some USD 25.3 million for 2021. The total drawdown for 2022, including the two tranches of USD 4 million each for cybersecurity and the Business Transformation initiative presented in the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2022, stood at USD 13 million, leaving USD 27.5 million still available for use. The Administration would examine options on the request to include actual OSI figures in future summary updates; it would also review how the geographical breakdown of the Operational Part of the Budget was presented, to ensure maximum clarity.

26. The Standing Committee recommended that the Council take note of the Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2022 (C/113/8).

Programme and Budget for 2023

27. The Deputy Director General for Management and Reform expressed appreciation for the confidence Member States had shown in the Organization by agreeing to provide more stable funding for its core functions to enable IOM to deliver on the expectations of Member States. The consensus reached at the Thirtieth Session of the Standing Committee, at a time of global financial constraints, demonstrated the continued importance of multilateralism. The budget reform process had acknowledged IOM's key role in the increasingly important area of migration, while the expanded definition of its core structure that included the leadership of country offices recognized that it remained a field-based, operational organization. The agreed budget reforms would also increase oversight and accountability at all levels of the Organization to ensure proper management of risks, compliance, and the implementation of results-based management.

28. The additional USD 60 million approved by Member States over five years would help to close funding gaps for the core structure; the first instalment of USD 12 million would be applied proportionately across the key areas of delivery, oversight and advancement. OSI, which was projected to increase by USD 18 million in 2023, would be used to cover emerging and existing priorities as the Organization expanded. Nevertheless, a sizeable funding gap remained. More than 100 country offices would continue to rely on projectized funding, while in the areas of oversight and advancement, there were 92 and 40 unfunded positions, respectively. The USD 12 million allocated for 2023 represented only 16 per cent of what the Administration considered necessary for the Organization to be fit for purpose. Expectations of what could be achieved with that amount must be realistic. Additional voluntary contributions, large or small, would be warmly welcomed, and the Administration remained committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in how they were used.

29. The Administration gave a slide presentation highlighting the key points set out in the document entitled Programme and Budget for 2023 (C/113/7). The Administrative Part of the Budget totalled CHF 65,346,816; the increase of CHF 11,760,000 over the 2022 budget equated to the additional USD 12 million approved by Member States. The Operational Part of the Budget was based on anticipated funding and was estimated at USD 1.3 billion, which was USD 100 million more than the budget projected at the same time the previous year for the 2022 budget. The budget level would be updated in subsequent revisions to the document as additional funding was secured for the Organization's activities. The projected OSI level of USD 160 million represented an increase of USD 18 million over the 2022 budget. Based on the current level of confirmed funding, it was projected

that the total expenditure for 2023 would match or exceed the USD 3 billion anticipated by the end of 2022. The core budget was funded predominantly by OSI (71%), with only 29 per cent covered by Member States' assessed contributions.

30. The increase in assessed contributions approved by Member States had been applied to cover 50 per cent of costs of Chiefs of Mission and Resource Management Officers in selected least developed countries, with the aim of reaching a broad spread of locations. Some of the extra money had also been used to partially fund new divisions and units at Headquarters that had been established following the creation of the two Deputy Director General posts within the Headquarters structure. Efforts had been made to harmonize the staffing structure of the regional offices and to reconfigure some country office structures to recognize functions already being undertaken, partly in line with the updated definition of the Organization's core structure. The Administration clarified that the geographical breakdown of resource allocation was based on funding secured for specific projects.

31. Member States highlighted the vital role of IOM as the lead United Nations agency on migration. The anticipated increase in level of activities was testament to the value donors placed on the Organization's ability to deliver. As the Administration implemented Standing Committee Resolution No. 31 and planned how it would use the additional assessed contributions to which Member States had agreed — even at a time of economic difficulty — prioritization, transparency and accountability would be key. It was particularly important for IOM to have a clear list of priorities and transparent reasoning for its budget proposals, driven by an assessment of which operations presented the greatest risk and which areas most urgently required investment. Evidence-based assessments would support the process. As demand for its activities and services increased, the Organization must be able to count on sustainable and predictable funding. The Organization should remain creative in securing resources, particularly unearmarked contributions, to ensure that the budget could be fully implemented; efforts to engage the private sector were welcome in that regard. Detailed information on how the extra resources would be used were requested, together with regular updates on the progress of implementation of the budget reforms. One representative said that funding requests to Member States should become more targeted, reflecting the priorities set, and that OSI should be used to complement coverage of urgent priority areas.

32. One representative, speaking on behalf of a regional group, welcomed the steps taken to prepare the Programme and Budget for 2023 in line with Standing Committee Resolution No. 31, while recognizing the difficulties of ensuring a more sustainable funding model for the Organization's core structure. The priority given to country offices in selected least developed countries, notably in his region, was especially welcome, as was the continued support the Organization provided for migration policy formulation and dialogues in the region.

33. A number of Member States emphasized the relevance of IOM's work to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. One, commending the quality of the Organization's work and its efforts to expand its activities and respond to the everyday needs of migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, highlighted the importance of partnerships with other humanitarian, stabilization and development actors, particularly those with in-depth knowledge of local circumstances and the needs of communities and vulnerable groups. The Organization's approach to tackling mobility crises and moving steadily towards population resilience and sustainable development was both pertinent and important. Another Member State encouraged others to increase their voluntary contributions to the Organization, unearmarked where possible. In the face of an apparent decrease in the budget for Regulating Migration and Facilitating Migration, one representative urged the Administration and donors to focus more on those areas and to encourage relevant programmes and projects, including those related to trafficking in persons and labour mobility.

34. With regard to human resources, one Member State emphasized the need for a well-balanced and inclusive approach to improve equitable geographical representation, in particular at senior management level, and highlighted the issue of language requirements for jobs in the Organization. Another acknowledged the need for additional positions, supported by a human resources management system geared towards leanness and efficiency. An appropriate balance must be struck between staffing and office costs and the funds and resources allocated to projects and capacity-building initiatives. One Member State expressed appreciation for the proposed increase in staff in the Office of the Inspector General but sought clarification as to whether the planned creation of legal hubs would be sufficient to address the associated increase in staffing needs to process the anticipated legal case load. As the staff of the Organization approached 19,000, continued investment in a robust and adequate human resources structure was also needed. Another representative emphasized that the agreed budget reform must be implemented as efficiently as possible. Increases in the Administrative Part of the Budget should cover a wide range of activities, not just strengthening human resources, and the Administration should outline its priorities and plans in that regard. One way to mitigate the increased risks inherent in the Organization's ever-expanding activities was to consider membership of the JIU and the ICSC. The recently adopted budget reforms provided an ideal opportunity to ensure sustainable oversight and accountability, albeit with some financial implications, which should be reflected in future budget documents should Member States decide to join either mechanism. The intended move towards results-based budgeting should be undertaken in close cooperation with Member States.

35. One Member State asked whether designating its country office as a mission with resource mobilization functions had any implications for the office's role and budget or the expectations placed upon the host country. Another asked why the amount of resources allocated to activities in her country had been reduced. A third drew attention to the impact of unilateral sanctions and the freezing of assets on the humanitarian work being done by governments such as his own to support migrants and refugees arriving from neighbouring countries. A fourth, while expressing particular appreciation for the timely support his Government had received from IOM during recent unprecedented flooding, noted a decrease in resources allocated to his country, despite growing challenges on the ground.

36. The Administration, responding to points raised, recalled that the Organization's budget was based on confirmed funding. A single large project for which funding was pending led to a decreased budget until funding was confirmed. A "bottom-up" approach was used to prepare the budget, whereby missions submitted budget requests for review at regional level, to ensure consistency with regional strategies, and further review at Headquarters. Proposals were made in close coordination with host governments, not by missions acting alone. With regard to additional staffing for human resources management and legal affairs, the aim was to standardize structures across regional offices within the five-year time frame for the implementation of budget reform. Designating a country office as an office with resource mobilization functions had no additional funding implications in the particular case concerned as it only formalized an existing situation. In future budget documents, the Administration would consider how best to reflect the categorization of staff to ensure a clearer presentation of the information specifically for national officers. As the Organization planned the move towards results-based budgeting, the Administration would certainly consult Member States. The results of an external assessment at the initial stages of the budget reform process had indicated that certain steps would need to be taken before results-based budgeting could be introduced, but the approval of a position for a results-based budgeting officer, for which recruitment was under way, meant that progress could soon be made. Member States would be kept fully informed.

37. The Deputy Director General for Management and Reform said that the Administration would strive to reflect Member States' priorities in its activities and budgeting. It was hoped that the short-term funding gap might be filled in due course; in the interim, more targeted requests for voluntary donations would enable Member States to address urgent funding needs and priorities. The

Organization aimed to provide more technical support to Member States and would continue to support countries in their vital work with migrants.

38. The Director General welcomed the support shown for how the Administration had implemented Standing Committee Resolution No. 31, as reflected in the Programme and Budget for 2023. The landmark decision would guarantee the Organization's future stability and support its work across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. Mechanisms to seek and leverage funding for humanitarian and peace-related activities were well established, but migration must become more prominent within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks if IOM was to fulfil its potential in that regard. The engagement of Member States would be crucial in allowing the Organization to access pooled funds and advancing the migration agenda. Similarly, IOM should seek to create the conditions to qualify for "green" funding; such funds could be mobilized to promote adaptation, mitigation, risk reduction and resilience in communities. With the number of internally displaced persons on the rise, host and donor countries must also act to deal with the immediate humanitarian impact of displacement and establish durable solutions. IOM was particularly well placed to tackle that challenge, which involved the transition from humanitarian funding to development funding.

39. The Standing Committee took note of the Programme and Budget for 2023, as set out in document C/113/7, and recommended that the Council approve CHF 65,346,816 for the Administrative Part of the Budget and USD 1.3 billion for the Operational Part of the Budget.

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

40. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Progress report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations (S/31/10), outlining the three types of audit – certification, performance and compliance – undertaken by the External Auditor. Onsite audit inspections had resumed, following their suspension during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the 35 outstanding recommendations were higher-level, strategic recommendations that required time and resources to implement, but were being addressed largely through the IGF, including the Business Transformation initiative. Some of the challenges in country offices related to acquisition and disposal of local assets, tax exemptions, procurement, and privileges and immunities, which all took time to negotiate. The Organization was committed to acting on all recommendations, the majority of which were expected to be implemented by the end of 2022.

41. One representative requested additional information on the ICT Strategy 2022-2025 mentioned in the report, and said that progress reports on implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations should identify which audit findings were of the highest priority for the Organization. Another representative asked whether the Administration had sufficient resources to implement the remaining recommendations in a timely manner with the additional funding from the budget reform measures. She encouraged IOM to prioritize those recommendations likely to result in cost savings and those associated with institutional performance.

42. The Administration said that delays to the implementation of certain recommendations were related not only to funding but also to the need to follow a sequential approach. Consideration would be given to prioritizing recommendations in future reports.

43. The Standing Committee took note of document S/31/10.

Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General

44. The Inspector General gave a presentation introducing the document entitled Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General (S/31/4). During the reporting period there had been 52 internal audits, and nearly 1,200 cases had been dealt with by the investigation function. Good use had been made of agile auditing protocols, and the backlog reported in previous periods had been cleared. There had been a continuous rise, however, in the number of allegations, as reflected in the number of open cases undergoing assessment, which stood at 124 compared with 49 at the end of the previous reporting period. That increase was likely due to the greater visibility of the Office and the “We are all in” system for making allegations confidentially online. In 2023 work was expected to focus on fraud prevention and would include the preparation of a fraud prevention manual and the organization of workshops on that topic.

45. Representatives of several Member States highlighted the critical role played by the Office in an effective oversight system, while other representatives stressed the importance of its work in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. One speaker asked how many allegations of such abuse and harassment had been received and another called for closer collaboration between the IOM Headquarters Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the Risk Management Unit.

46. Many Member States expressed concern at the rise in the number of allegations of misconduct, while acknowledging that greater visibility of the Office and the “We are all in” system were possible factors. One speaker asked whether, and how, reports received were analysed in order to help identify areas of high risk and better prioritize organizational investment, while other representatives drew attention to the importance of the regular briefings provided by the Office in addition to the yearly reports.

47. Several representatives requested more information on the number, type and nature of allegations and investigations, as well as details of any punitive action taken. One speaker asked whether allegations of misconduct on the part of implementing partner organizations were included in the case numbers; if so, due diligence should be exercised in vetting and, where necessary, penalizing those organizations. Another asked what time limits applied to the launch, completion and review of investigations.

48. Two representatives highlighted the need for the investigation function of the Office to have sufficient human and financial resources, while a third asked how the Office assessed its capabilities to efficiently carry out its functions and whether any staffing standards or caseload ratios were used as benchmarks. Another two speakers expressed support for the focus on fraud prevention, with a third emphasizing the importance of training in that regard.

49. Turning to the internal audit function, two Member States asked for further information on agile auditing protocols and their expected effectiveness. Many other speakers stressed the need to address recurrent audit findings: one asked where an overview of the relevant recommendations and status of their implementation could be found; another asked how those findings were incorporated into the activities of the Risk Management Unit; and a third drew attention to the findings under “governance and management” and “programme and project management”, which should also apply to project recipients. Two representatives asked for further information on the key areas of improvement identified in the external assessment of the internal audit function.

50. The Inspector General, responding to points raised, said that the caseload benchmark for the Office in 2018 had been 600 allegations and 100 investigations. The rise in the number of allegations since then reflected not only the confidence placed in the Office but the greater footprint of the

Organization worldwide, which was growing at a yearly rate of 10 per cent. The concept of agile auditing had originated in software development and involved one month of intensive, interactive coordination with the audit team. Providing a breakdown of the types of allegations, he said that the majority (316) were void, duplicated or not within the scope of the Office; the second highest category (217) was fraud; the third (188) was related to harassment; and the fourth (44) was related to purchasing and procurement. There had been 60 allegations concerning sexual exploitation and abuse, and 24 cases of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. In addition to the planned focus on fraud, priority was assigned to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. There were no set time limits for investigations, as cases varied in complexity, but compliance with relevant jurisprudence of the ILO would be ensured. The recurrent internal audit findings, and action taken, would be shown on an IOM intranet web page available to all managers. The three areas of improvement identified in the external audit, including better risk planning and training, were all being addressed.

51. The Standing Committee took note of document S/31/4.

Report on the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee

52. The Chairperson of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee gave a presentation introducing the document entitled Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee — Activities from September 2021 to August 2022 (S/31/3). During its second year of activities, the Committee had focused on building its understanding of IOM's business and the challenges it faced in order to provide insights to assist the Director General in the discharge of his oversight responsibilities. Discussions in the Committee had covered a variety of areas, including internal audit and investigations; risk management; ethics and conduct; information systems; and organizational realignment. The Committee would attend the United Nations-wide meeting of the chairs of similar committees in December 2022 to discuss issues of common interest. Future discussions of the Committee would focus on risk management, and the Committee would also consider procurement, the digitalization of the Organization, data management and human resources management.

53. The Director General emphasized the challenge that had confronted the Committee in starting its work just as the COVID-19 pandemic had begun. He expressed appreciation for the Committee's advice, support and questions and looked forward to further cooperation.

54. The representative of one Member State expressed his country's keen interest in engaging with the Committee on the next steps outlined. Another representative sought the Committee's opinion on agile auditing and asked what IOM needed to do to achieve a higher level of risk management. She sought clarification on the areas of common interest discussed with the External Auditor and on whether the internal audit function workplan for 2023 in general had been discussed, and suggested that the Committee could review and provide a status report on implementation of the oversight recommendations in its future reports, in line with practice in other organizations in the United Nations system. She also enquired about the review of the Committee's terms of reference and how any changes would enhance the Committee's work.

55. The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, responding to the points raised, said that no changes to the Committee's terms of reference were anticipated as they provided all the tools needed for it to carry out its functions. That said, the terms of reference would be reviewed annually to determine if changes were warranted. The Committee discussed all of the Organization's internal oversight functions to make sure that plans were being implemented and that coordination was in place in order to maximize efficiencies, ensure that particular cases were dealt with promptly, and promote knowledge-sharing. The goal of discussions with similar independent committees in other organizations of the United Nations system was to find out what topics were being covered in their

deliberations that might be beneficial to IOM, learning from more established bodies and exploring what might be done to better serve the Organization.

56. The Standing Committee took note of document S/31/3.

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

57. The Legal Counsel introduced the document entitled Ninth annual report of the Director General on improvements in the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States (S/31/6), which covered the period from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022. She recalled Article 23 of the IOM Constitution, which established the legal basis for those privileges and immunities and further noted that in Resolution No. 1266, the Council had called on Member States, Observer States and other States where the Organization had activities (“relevant States and places”) to grant the Organization privileges and immunities substantively similar to those that the United Nations specialized agencies were entitled to under the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies. In the period from 2014 to 2022, the number of relevant States and places granting such privileges and immunities had increased from 83 to 102. Nevertheless, in 37 of the current total of 185 relevant States and places, the inviolability of IOM premises and archives was not recognized. IOM was not exempt from direct taxation in 37 relevant States and places, while internationally and locally recruited staff were not exempt from taxation on their salaries in 34 and 61 relevant States and places, respectively.

58. Immunity from legal process meant that employment-related disputes should not be handled by national courts, but by the Organization’s internal justice mechanisms, which included the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization. National courts had issued orders for contempt of court against the Organization for failing to promptly execute judgments, thereby subjecting staff members who asserted the privileges and immunities of the Organization to the risk of fines, criminal sanctions, and arrest and detention for up to six months.

59. The Legal Counsel stressed that the absence of privileges and immunities seriously undermined IOM’s ability to function effectively. She recalled that in 2013, the Council had considered that strengthening the core structure and improving privileges and immunities were both aimed at enabling the Organization to function more effectively. Now that the Council had strengthened the core structure through budget reform, it remained important that IOM did not continue to be burdened by the transactional costs and challenges posed by the absence of privileges and immunities. She expressed appreciation to those States that had worked with IOM to strengthen its privileges and immunities.

60. The representative of one Member State emphasized her Government’s commitment to upholding the Organization’s privileges and immunities so that it could deliver effectively on its mandate; however, it was vital that such immunity should not be abused. She took note of the fact that the Organization’s staff members could face a heavy financial burden if they were required to make contributions to both national and IOM social security systems with respect to health benefits, and that, pursuant to IOM’s memorandum of understanding with the UNJSPF, they were excluded from participation in that Fund if they participated in national social security schemes. The Administration should seek ways to allow staff to choose their preferred scheme.

61. The Legal Counsel said that the memorandum of understanding with the UNJSPF was being reviewed to explore the possibilities in that regard.

62. The Standing Committee took note of document S/31/6 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.

Update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building

63. The Administration gave a slide presentation highlighting the key points set out in the document containing the seventh update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building (S/31/9). The contract for the loan to cover the cost of the studies for the new building had been approved in March 2022, and a loan for the remaining amount of the estimated construction costs would be requested by the end of 2023. Following a competition, the architects and an initial design concept had been selected. The next stage was to develop the concept into a fully functional design, taking into account the results of risk assessments and consultations with stakeholders, in addition to requirements relating to environmental standards, universal accessibility and inclusion, and healthy and safe workspace design. IOM was working closely with the host State and with organizations occupying neighbouring buildings.

64. During the ensuing discussion, representatives welcomed the progress made. The attention to be given to meeting standards of accessibility, occupational health and environmental sustainability in the new building design was commended. One speaker suggested that the design should include a space for use by migrants and migrant groups and that his proposal should be discussed by a diverse staff consultation group, including Member State representatives.

65. Replying to comments made and questions asked, the Administration said that Member States' suggestions regarding the design and the consultation process would be taken on board. There were no plans to expand or modify the current parking area. The impact of inflation on the estimated costs of the project had been assessed and taken into account, and the Administration would strive to develop the project to fit the current budget of CHF 72 million.

66. The Standing Committee took note of the seventh update on the plans for the IOM Headquarters building, contained in document S/31/9.

Report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities

67. The representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities, noted that the Working Group had held one meeting in 2022, during which it had discussed the progress made in IOM's implementation of United Nations development system reform requirements and the implications of IOM participation in the JIU and the ICSC. Member States had welcomed the progress towards implementing the reforms and had encouraged IOM to play a more active role in peacebuilding. With regard to IOM participating in the JIU and ICSC, the Administration had explained the implications in terms of cost and loss of operational flexibility; some Member States had nonetheless suggested that the advantages would outweigh the costs and that participating in the United Nations common system would help to uphold the principles of equity and cost-efficiency. In addition to those topics, the importance of enhancing social security provision for migrant workers and identifying global skills gaps had been highlighted, and calls had been made to reconsider the requirement for IOM staff to have working knowledge of a second United Nations official language in addition to English.

68. One representative asked whether the budget increase would be used to strengthen IOM's capacities in its coordinating role on migration topics within the United Nations system, and emphasized that Member States should be briefed on internal discussions on IOM participation in the

JIU and ICSC so that they could take decisions as necessary. Another representative underscored the importance of joining the two entities.

69. Responding to questions, the Director General said that the financial costs of joining the JIU and ICSC had not been factored into the budget reform process. The views of the Inspector General and the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee had already been requested, and the Administration planned to consult the External Auditor. While joining the JIU would be a relatively simple process, the review of the Organization's current contractual framework would have to be completed before the Administration could provide Member States with an impact assessment in relation to the possibility of joining the ICSC. The Working Group would be provided with further information in advance of its meeting in the first quarter of 2023.

70. The Standing Committee took note of the presentation and of the comments made by Member States and the Administration.

Update on human resources management

71. The Administration gave a slide presentation illustrating key developments in human resources management in 2021–2022. The Organization's workforce had grown again to number over 25,000, in addition to some 5,000 third-party contractors at certain duty stations. The proportion of staff from non-OECD DAC countries had increased to 83 per cent; in the P-4 to D-2 categories, however, it still stood at only 40 per cent, though there had been some improvement. Gender representation was approximately equal up to the P-4 level; at all levels, including P-5 and above, where women were under-represented, the overall trend since 2015 was nonetheless positive. Gender parity had been achieved in the international staff category, but men occupied 55 per cent of positions at P-4 level and above.

72. The COVID-19 pandemic had continued to present administrative, policy and welfare challenges, affecting the mental as well as the physical health of staff. The Department for Human Resources Management had been developing its People Strategy for 2022–2027, in addition to undertaking country office typology and reclassification exercises, in response to rapidly changing situations in some regions, and focusing on organizational design, especially in terms of the new Headquarters structure. Other key activities had included the continued roll-out of the Unified Staff Rules and Regulations; recontracting insurance outsourcing of health claims processing, with significant resultant savings; implementing phase I of the global payroll initiative; recalibrating the performance management system, which would go live in January 2023 and had served as a test case for the Business Transformation process; rethinking the delivery of training, with a greater emphasis on virtual provision; focusing on diversity initiatives; launching the Human Resources Handbook, which had been extensively viewed online and would soon be available in Spanish and French; preparing for the launch of the third global staff survey in the first part of 2023; and promulgating several critical policies, notably on respectful workplaces, flexible work and performance management.

73. The Staff Welfare Office had been expanded, with additional staff counsellor positions created in regions of particular need. Individual counselling had continued and group counselling sessions had increasingly been provided. The Office had responded to a number of critical incidents, held webinars in various languages on a range of mental health and well-being topics, and given training in compassionate leadership, which had been made mandatory for incoming Chiefs of Mission. As the COVID-19 pandemic eased, efforts were being redoubled to talk to staff in person and to help staff assimilate into new duty stations. Unfortunately, many of the Office's positions and activities remained unfunded for 2023.

74. The main focus in 2023 would be the IGF and the Business Transformation initiative; the implications of the latter would be particularly complex in the area of human resources. In order to keep pace with staffing increases, the foundational aspects of the centralized human resources function must be strengthened. While the recent addition of posts at the Manila Administrative Centre was welcome, much more was needed, especially to support the bolstering of the internal justice system. The human resources departments of comparable organizations within the United Nations system were considerably larger, in real and relative terms, and dealt with a much simpler contractual system. Efficiencies were being sought across the United Nations, while IOM was planning to introduce a new contractual framework that was aligned on best practices elsewhere and left open the possibility of joining the ICSC, while not compromising the Organization's much-valued agility and flexibility.

75. During the ensuing discussion, Member States emphasized that the Organization's staff were its greatest asset in realizing the shared aspiration of upholding the rights and welfare of migrants. Due attention must be paid to safeguarding staff members' welfare in turn. Appreciation was expressed for initiatives on diversity, disability and staff welfare. The increase in the proportion of women on the Organization's staff was welcome, and efforts to that end should continue, but care should be taken to ensure that women from vulnerable groups and a range of ethnicities were visibly represented. Consideration should be given to adopting an open and inclusive language requirement policy for potential staff members.

76. One Member State representative, observing that IOM relied more heavily on P-2 and P-3 positions than did comparable organizations, asked why that was the case. He suggested that a comprehensive human resources strategy should be agreed by Member States to ensure that the Organization's approach, especially in terms of certain aspects of diversity, was acceptable to all. Another emphasized the importance of balancing strong human resources management against the budgetary concerns of Member States and asked whether the recent increase in assessed contributions had resulted in additional funds being allocated to strengthen the human resources function.

77. While the information made available at the meeting was valuable, it would have been useful to circulate it in advance to facilitate substantive discussion. One Member State requested details of the age distribution and geographical distribution of staff in all categories and asked whether there was a set vacancy rate. Another asked whether specific figures existed for the proportion of staff members with disabilities and whether initiatives had been taken to recruit people from countries not represented on the Organization's staff; she also asked whether the activities of the human resources function covered third-party contractors. In developing a new contractual framework, had IOM taken into account best practices from other Organizations with a similar operational profile, where flexibility was also important? A third Member State suggested that IOM adopt the practice of holding a dedicated briefing on people working in the Organization. A fourth asked when the results of the third global staff survey would be ready for presentation and sought additional information on the People Strategy being developed.

78. The Administration, replying to comments and questions, said that further progress in achieving gender parity would hinge on policy and cultural issues. Women applying for P-4 posts or higher were essentially treated as internal candidates and given priority, which had improved the situation, but more remained to be done. The proportion of P-2 and P-3 posts within the Organization reflected its operational nature; other United Nations agencies played a more advisory role, with posts accordingly classified at a higher level. IOM's relatively young workforce brought great opportunities in terms of innovation and agility, but some posts were arguably under-graded. Given its highly projectized nature, the Organization had no set vacancy rate. The People Strategy would focus on strengthening leadership capacity at all levels; building a world-class workforce, with consideration for

diversity and retention of staff; and staff welfare. In reviewing the contractual system, every care would be taken to maintain IOM's flexibility and agility, which were the envy of other organizations.

79. IOM saw strength in diversity in all its forms. Data disaggregated by age and country could be provided, but information on the proportion of staff members with disabilities was more sensitive. The disability working group would report in general terms, while ensuring respect for the individual situations and wishes of staff members. The number of Member States not represented on the staff fluctuated frequently; efforts were being made to address the issue, including in policy terms, but resource constraints represented a challenge. Third-party contractors had limited access to training and development for the same reason, though key training on matters such as the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse was provided. It was anticipated that the third global staff survey would be launched in March 2023, so indicative results were likely to be available in time for the Thirty-second Session of the Standing Committee; more detailed information would be presented later in the year. For future discussions, information could be provided earlier; consideration would also be given to holding a dedicated briefing on staff, although the Department was constrained by its lack of resources.

80. The Director General said that IOM posts tended to be graded at a lower level than similar functions in other United Nations agencies as result of its highly projectized structure. Even after the budget reform, IOM's resources were still almost entirely dependent on projects. The contrast had become more apparent since IOM had joined the United Nations system, and change would take time. Internal discussions were needed on whether posts within missions should be regraded on an ad hoc basis or as part of a more permanent system involving periodic reviews. The Organization needed to be able to compete on an equal footing with others in attracting the best staff, but could only operate within the resources it had. Similar decisions would be needed in strengthening the human resources function, which would be approached in the context of the budget reform process. Some additional positions were already included in that process; the eventual aim was to have human resources business partners in all regional offices.

81. The Deputy Director General for Management and Reform said that ten additional human resources positions were planned for subsequent phases of the budget reform; it was anticipated that funding for those positions would be secured in time. As the Organization grew, OSI could be used to bridge temporary funding gaps.

82. The Standing Committee took note of the presentation made by the Administration.

Statement by the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association Committee

83. The Chairperson of the Global Staff Association Committee gave an oral presentation, which included a short introductory video, highlighting the importance of IOM staff, the challenges they face and, in turn, the importance of effective and meaningful democratically elected staff representation. While he welcomed the positive implications of the budget reform process for staff contract practices, further efforts were needed to ensure that funding for staff contracts became more predictable and reliable and was adequately calculated. He called for increased transparency, equity and standardization across grades and levels. As staff retention was essential, training opportunities for staff members should be expanded, and transparent, participatory (i.e consistent participation of Committee nominees in appointment boards), competitive and fair career development opportunities should be further developed. Incidents of harassment, bullying, abuse of power and other forms of discrimination should also be tackled head on. Diversity should be promoted, including full gender equality, modern family-friendly policies needed to be further expanded.

84. In early 2022, the Committee had presented its detailed recommendations on the language requirements to the Administration, which were summarized as advocating for globally inclusive

multilingualism in to provide equal opportunities for candidates from all regions worldwide. The Committee was also working with the Administration to strengthen IOM's internal justice system through practical solutions, such as the planned provision of improved training and support for IOM lay members serving on joint administrative review boards (JARBs). Individual staff members facing work-related problems could call on the Committee for advice and assistance, including in the form of advice, referrals to services such as those provided by the Office of the Ombudsperson or external lawyers, and support for legal costs. If critical and controversial issues were to be tackled successfully, the Committee and the Administration needed to continuously nurture the trust and mutual respect on which their cooperation was based.

85. The Standing Committee took note of the presentation made by the Chairperson of the IOM Global Staff Association Committee.

IOM partnerships with the private sector

86. The Director General recalled that Standing Committee Resolution No. 31 requested the Administration to prepare a strategy on private sector engagement and create a Goodwill Ambassadors programme, authorizing a one-time drawdown of USD 5 million from the OSI reserve for that purpose. Much work remained for IOM to achieve a closer relationship with the private sector, not just from the point of view of funding but also in terms of the impact that collaboration with the private sector could have on improving migration policies and practices. A key driver of migratory flows was labour shortages, which had become much more visible in the tourism and airline sectors in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. IOM would therefore welcome and encourage the private sector to be more vocal in stressing the positive outcomes of safe, orderly and regular migration.

87. The Administration gave a presentation introducing the document entitled Private Sector Engagement Strategy (S/31/13). Between 2016 and 2022, IOM had raised on average USD 6.7 million annually from private sector revenue, of which 64 per cent had come from companies, 32 per cent from foundations and under 5 per cent from individuals. There had been a large increase in private sector revenue in 2021, thanks to a USD 5 million donation from a famine relief foundation for activities in Yemen, and in 2022, largely as a result of an overwhelming response from the private sector to support IOM's work in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. From 2016 to 2022, IOM had received. Most revenue sources came from North America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, while funding went mainly to Asia and the Pacific, global initiatives, and the Middle East and North Africa. The private sector had predominantly been engaged in emergency response and assistance to displaced populations and labour migration initiatives

88. The vision of the forthcoming Strategy was to enhance IOM's collaboration with the private sector to support safe, orderly and regular migration by implementing a sustainable approach to private sector engagement that enabled greater effectiveness of IOM's humanitarian and development outcomes. Through a targeted year-on-year annual increase of USD 2 million, the aim was to reach the goal set by Member States of USD 30 million by 2030. The new strategy set forth a new approach based on the three pillars for private sector engagement: impact, income and innovation. Key features of the strategy would be: the Goodwill Ambassador pilot, engaging with high-profile individuals who could leverage their platforms to talk about the benefits of migration; individual giving, including the launch of a digital fundraising pilot; an Islamic philanthropy fund, which would be piloted in 2023; training and guidance on private sector engagement, which would be shared with missions and private sector focal points worldwide to help them with their outreach to the private sector in their local contexts; a due diligence policy to limit reputational risk; strengthened communications, marketing and visibility; use of a customer relationship management tool to support strategic and coordinated outreach to the private sector and enhanced donor care engagement; strengthened engagement with national committees; and increased access to United Nations sister

agencies' fundraising networks, to learn from their experiences and expand IOM's partnerships and fundraising.

89. One representative highlighted the need to further develop the strategy and suggested including an in-depth analysis of the current state of private sector engagement. IOM could also examine not just figures but also lessons learned, including challenges, benefits from partnerships and the current situation faced by IOM and other similar agencies. A focused conversation with potential or current private sector partners was needed to develop practical and realistic strategies; the interests, values and aims of partners must be understood to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. The appeal of IOM compared to other humanitarian agencies should also be taken into consideration. Another representative welcomed the proposed strategy as a good starting point and urged more Member States to encourage the private sector to engage with the programme.

90. The Director General said that the support of Member States in reaching out to their own private sectors would be appreciated. The Organization would do its utmost to share information on how it was engaging with entities in their countries.

91. The Standing Committee took note of document S/31/13.

Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership

92. The Deputy Director General for Operations, welcoming the opportunity to brief Member States on the items they had proposed, introduced a document entitled IOM Development Fund – Status report: 1 January to 30 September 2022 (S/31/12). She expressed appreciation for the USD 16 million made available in 2022 to support developing Member States, and thanked the Governments of Austria and Belgium in particular for their contributions. Project funding requests showed an increasing focus on migration, environment, climate change and risk reduction, reflecting Member States' recognition of IOM's unique position to respond to the growing importance of human mobility in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters. Member States were also investing in innovative migration programming to strengthen countries' resilience and policies on climate change adaptation, which was key to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the Global Compact, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(a) Update on displacement, migration and climate action: promoting innovative approaches to prevention, preparedness, response and solutions

93. The Deputy Director General for Operations said that the first thematic update aimed to provide a snapshot of the first year of the roll-out of IOM's Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030. In the run-up to the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), it was necessary to seek inclusive solutions for the most affected people, whether displaced by disaster, moving internally or migrating internationally, but also for those who wished to stay. The world was approaching a tipping point: disasters now occurred at nearly five times the rate that they had 40 years ago, and the trend was set to worsen. According to the World Bank, up to 216 million people across six regions could move within their countries by 2050. Climate change and food insecurity would also have knock-on effects on the cost of living, with the most vulnerable people, including women and young people, hardest hit. But the window to act was still open. Concerted efforts to cut global greenhouse gas emissions and to ensure inclusive and resilient development could reduce the scale of internal climate migration by as much as 80 per cent. The evidence was clear: the time for action was now.

94. The Administration introduced the document entitled Update on displacement, migration and climate action: promoting innovative approaches to prevention, preparedness, response and solutions (S/31/11), supplemented by a slide presentation. The convergence of climate risks, conflicts and development gaps acted as a risk multiplier, generating devastating effects of disaster displacement. Migration in the context of climate change could be transformed into an opportunity, however, allowing populations to adapt while living with manageable risks; that was a central element of IOM's Institutional Strategy. Integrated solutions to respond to the interconnected crises, featuring an innovative approach to prevention, preparedness and response, included leveraging IOM's global leadership on disaster displacement data to ensure effective early warning and early action by providing crucial information regarding internally displaced persons. The IOM Global Data Institute, which housed the Displacement Tracking Matrix, was expanding its data collection and analysis work on climate change.

95. Given the dramatic rise in humanitarian needs, cost-effective, locally owned solutions reflecting a multidimensional approach to disaster risk management were critical, particularly for States with limited resources, and were a key element in IOM's innovative responses. Linking migration management to adaptation strategies and supporting policy developments to facilitate regular migration pathways in the context of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation were important parts of IOM's work under the Institutional Strategy. In addition, the Organization used its role as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration to strategically leverage partnerships in seeking innovative solutions to address the effects of climate change; harnessed the IOM Development Fund to that end; and also employed its dedicated capacity-building programme to support government officials and community members, including women, young people and children, in their efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

96. Many Member States expressed appreciation for the update and endorsed the Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030, also welcoming the Director General's appointment of a Special Envoy for Migration and Climate Action. The representative of one regional group confirmed the importance of building local and national adaptive capacity and strengthening resilience to prevent, prepare for and respond to displacement, and called for increased funding to support climate change adaptation, minimize displacement and build the resilience of those communities most affected. The representative of another regional group commended IOM's commitment to finding sustainable solutions but said that further efforts were needed to avert, minimize and address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. It was important to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach, underpinned by multilateralism. Since the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26), the regional group had mobilized over 34 billion euros of climate finance, representing 35 per cent of global commitments, in solidarity with developing countries; it was important to push for further convergence, at both domestic and multilateral levels, between the Sustainable Development Goals and climate agendas. The group intended to use its position as Chair of the Platform on Disaster Displacement to further steer global coordination so as to provide greater protection to people displaced in the context of disasters.

97. Speakers acknowledged that climate change was a risk multiplier, as it interacted with political, social, economic and demographic factors; its impact on human mobility was therefore a key international migration policy issue. One representative endorsed IOM's view that migration should not only be seen as a consequence of climate change but could also provide a solution to help people adapt to climate change. Another said that climate change and biodiversity loss should be addressed from a human rights perspective, including the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and agreed with the focus of IOM's work under the Institutional Strategy. The representatives of one regional group and one Member State observed that climate-induced displacement could not be viewed solely from a humanitarian perspective; it was a developmental problem and should be

addressed as such through the joint efforts of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors. Global support was required in order to develop innovative policies, building on the lessons learned from the countries most affected by climate change, and there was also a need to build resilience at local level and strengthen the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. Another representative added that it was important to break the silos of the global processes relating to displacement and climate change and to address those links in a more comprehensive and inclusive manner. International coordination and collaboration were needed more than ever, and IOM's joint efforts with other United Nations agencies were therefore appreciated. A further speaker drew attention to the second workplan of the migration and climate change workstream of the United Nations Network on Migration, stressing the need for all forums and communities of interest to work together.

98. One Member State expressed concern at the rising number of persons displaced as a result of disasters, at the effects on countries of origin and destination and at the increased rates of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The countries most affected were those most vulnerable to climate change, where additional challenges – including population growth, poverty and threats to peace and security – created complex drivers for migration and displacement and were directly linked to their sustainable development. Tackling and minimizing the adverse drivers that compelled people to leave their countries and enhancing pathways for regular migration were key issues for her country. Such pathways, and supporting the ethical recruitment of legal migrants, constituted an important adaptation strategy. Another Member State drew attention to the need to ensure that an individual's decision to migrate remained voluntary; to that end, more than 70 per cent of his country's climate finance was allocated to adaptation and resilience programming, which focused on diversifying livelihoods, increasing remittance flows and supporting sustainable development. A third said that climate change had drastic effects on food security and therefore on migratory trends, drawing attention to ongoing projects in her country related to promoting agriculture that was resilient to climate change and strengthening climate change adaptability, especially regarding water management, in rural regions. All actors of the international community must work together to respond to existing challenges by guaranteeing adequate funding, taking into account countries' specific needs.

99. The representative of one Member State said that the effects of climate change increased the risk of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa and contributed to forced displacement. The area should be assigned priority in IOM's work, and budgetary resources should be granted to urgent programmes accordingly. Africa was the main victim of climate change, from an economic, political and migratory point of view, but the continent played almost no part in global warming, with less than 0.5 per cent of global emissions emanating from sub-Saharan Africa. Mitigation and adaptation had to be based on an urgent, common, global and informed response, and measures and resources aimed at avoiding and reducing displacement and strengthening the resilience of communities must be supported.

100. IOM was commended for its efforts to provide data on disasters and displacement, with speakers attaching particular importance to its work to establish early warning systems, as well as to projects to improve local conditions and adapt the guide for planning mass evacuations in natural disasters (MEND guide) to specific countries, which enabled affected communities to adapt their economic activities and thereby reduce migration flows. One speaker called upon all IOM Member States, donors and partners to continue supporting the programmes highlighted in the report. The representatives of one regional group and a Member State welcomed IOM's signing of the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations, with the latter also commending the Organization's plans to join the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative and the Centre of Excellence for Climate and Disaster Resilience, and requested information on how IOM intended to contribute to those efforts. More information on how the Global Data Institute was expanding its data collection on climate change and on the expected outcomes would be welcome. It was not clear whether IOM would specifically address the gaps

described in paragraph 12 of the report or whether that initiative would be pursued in coordination with others. Information would also be welcome on how climate factors would be incorporated into any protection measures for migrants in situations of vulnerability.

101. The Administration welcomed the support expressed for the Institutional Strategy and took note of the comments made by Member States. With regard to questions raised, efforts were being made to develop a uniform set of displacement and climate change indicators to allow for more detailed analysis across the board. Work was being carried out on different elements of predictable financing, including towards the accreditation of the Organization to be able to access “green” funds. It was estimated that USD 24 million would be required to support the most urgent priorities in selected countries, not precluding the need for larger financial resources to bring IOM’s solutions on climate mobility at scale and with a broader geographical coverage. IOM would continue to prioritize close collaboration with its partners in its role as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, leveraging various policy frameworks in order to achieve overall policy coherence.

102. The Deputy Director General for Operations said that the areas of data, protection, climate and forced displacement were all priorities; they were not treated as individual silos but addressed within an integrated and comprehensive approach. The aim was to work across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus to find integrated solutions for people who wished to stay, for people who wished to move and for people already on the move.

(b) Increased availability of labour mobility pathways for inclusive and prosperous societies

103. The Deputy Director General for Operations said that the progress declaration from Member States during the International Migration Review Forum in May 2022 had demonstrated the growing interest in enhancing and diversifying the availability of labour mobility pathways to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. While expanding such pathways was important, the effectiveness of existing pathways must also be improved. Migrants should have access to information on their rights and obligations at all stages of migration, including information on ethical recruitment, skills, qualifications, work permit requirements, living and working conditions, wages and benefits, and access to justice and social protection. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the particular need to protect migrants in situations of vulnerability, such as those who worked in the informal economy. Migrant workers were more likely than others to find themselves in abusive or exploitative work environments.

104. The Administration gave a presentation introducing the document entitled *Increased availability of labour mobility pathways for inclusive and prosperous societies (S/31/8)*. To enhance labour mobility pathways and build more equitable and prosperous societies, a combination of geographic, prospective and rights-based approaches was needed to address demographic, environmental, social and labour-market challenges.

105. Despite the challenges it posed, well-managed labour migration continued to be a critical policy tool across the globe, with countries of destination relying on migrant workers to meet production demand and compensate for labour shortages in key economic sectors. Labour migration benefited migrants, their communities and their countries of origin through remittance flows, transfer of investments and technology, and acquisition of critical skills from returning migrants and transnational communities. Recent studies had shown that there would be an estimated shortage of 85 million workers around the globe by 2030. Labour shortages and changing migration patterns affected countries of origin, too, creating potential disruptions in local labour markets. Moreover, the production and supply chain challenges that had emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic had increased automation in the workplace, with the resulting use of technology creating more need for companies to acquire the right technology-related skills. It was therefore crucial for Member States to

increase the availability and effectiveness of labour mobility pathways that could contribute to better labour-market and development outcomes.

106. The document outlined recommendations for IOM and Member States, centred on the three combined approaches. They included: promoting labour mobility pathways that included skills development and recognition and other innovative labour mobility solutions to benefit migrants, as well as countries of origin and destination; supporting effective implementation of labour mobility pathways by developing and implementing multilateral and bilateral labour migration agreements, in accordance with the guidance on bilateral labour migration agreements developed by the United Nations Network on Migration; enhancing Member States' capacities to incorporate prospective analysis tools into their labour migration and labour market information systems; and promoting dialogue among the various stakeholders involved in labour migration and mobility.

107. During the ensuing discussion, Member States shared their experiences of working to increase the availability of labour mobility pathways. A number of Member States highlighted the significant role played by labour migration in the development of economies and societies and the resultant need to open up new pathways so as to harness the full potential of the migration and development nexus, ensure the inclusion of labour migration in policy formulation and implementation, and balance the need for scarce skills in countries of destination with preventing brain drain in countries of origin. One Member State particularly highlighted the value of labour mobility mechanisms in helping States to address crisis situations and make progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Another emphasized that skills mobility partnerships should be universal in their approach and vision in order to benefit all stakeholders, not only countries of destination. A third Member State drew attention to the concept of skilled refugee labour agreements, which were being piloted in his country.

108. Several representatives called on IOM and its Member States to address the root causes of irregular and forced migration, which resulted in unsafe and illegal migration pathways, putting lives in danger and denying migrants their basic rights. Ensuring that migration was safe, orderly and regular would deter irregular migration, reduce the vulnerability of irregular migrants and minimize the human, economic and social costs at community and State level. One representative underlined the importance of continuing to fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

109. Member States emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination between IOM and its partners, including civil society and other United Nations bodies. One also highlighted the importance of IOM's support of regional consultative processes on migration, which facilitated cooperation and partnerships on migrant protection. In partnership with the ILO, IOM should support the establishment and implementation of bilateral and multilateral agreements between States as a viable way to promote safe pathways, manage migration and benefit both governments and migrants. The principles of ethical recruitment, together with adequate monitoring and screening mechanisms, should guide bilateral, regional and international cooperation in the area of labour mobility. A group representative called on IOM to work with the ILO in supporting Member States to conduct needs-based assessments that would pave the way for evidence-based development of national migration policies and the establishment of regular labour mobility pathways. Two representatives, highlighting the importance of strengthening regional and subregional frameworks that supported the movement of migrants, specifically urged IOM to strengthen its collaboration with the ILO and its tripartite constituents on labour migration initiatives within the various regional economic communities, taking advantage of the ILO's existing work on migrant protection.

110. Two representatives urged IOM and Member States to advocate social protection and the portability of social security entitlements for migrants. IOM should share its knowledge in that regard at regional level, particularly with ASEAN countries. Another representative requested IOM to advise

governments on the challenges of establishing labour migration schemes that granted migrants non-discriminatory access to national social security mechanisms. One representative welcomed IOM's efforts to consolidate guidance on better integrating human mobility into national adaptation plans, with another expressing particular support for the prospective analysis tools described by the Administration.

111. One Member State said that a clear differentiation between regular and irregular migration was important to clarify the responsibilities and obligations of States of origin, transit and destination, especially with respect to access to basic services. The economic realities of destination States must be taken into account. Increasingly, private-sector practices deliberately excluded host-country nationals in favour of migrant workers. Quota systems and policies to direct migrant workers to sectors where skills were scarce could help to ensure that nationals of destination States were not marginalized and to avoid unnecessary competition for limited resources.

112. The Administration, responding to points raised, took note of the experiences shared, which the Administration would be pleased to discuss with Member States bilaterally. Following on from the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, the Organization would continue to pursue partnerships. An ILO–IOM workplan for 2021–2023 had just been finalized to operationalize the agreement signed with the ILO in October 2022, focusing on fair and ethical recruitment, global skills partnerships, bilateral labour agreements, and combating trafficking in persons and modern slavery.

113. The Standing Committee took note of documents S/31/8, S/31/11 and S/31/12 and of the comments made by Member States.

Provisional workplan for the IOM governing bodies during 2023

114. The Director General, introducing the document entitled Provisional workplan for the IOM governing bodies during 2023 (S/31/7), said that, in a normal year, there would be two Standing Committee sessions, one in June and another in October, and a Council session at the end of the year. However, in 2023, there would be a special session of the Council to hold elections for the post of Director General. Special sessions of the Council were usually scheduled back-to-back with the Standing Committee, but the dates were still to be decided.

115. The Standing Committee took note of document S/31/7.

Closure of the session

116. The Chairperson declared the Thirty-first Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance closed on Wednesday, 2 November 2022, at 5.45 p.m.