

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

Thirty-third Session

REPORT OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE

ON THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION

Geneva

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CONTENTS

Introduction and opening of the session	1
Adoption of the agenda	2
Status report on outstanding contributions to the Administrative Part of the Budget and Member State voting rights	2
Presentation by the Director General	2
Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2023.....	4
Programme and Budget for 2024.....	5
Provisional workplan for the IOM governing bodies during 2024	7
Progress report on the implementation of the External Auditor’s recommendations	8
Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General.....	8
Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee	10
Report on the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States	11
Update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building	11
Report of the Chairperson of the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities.....	12
Update on human resources management	13
Statement by the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association Committee	15
Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership.....	15
(a) Delivering impact through data for action, insight and foresight.....	16
(b) Adapting skills-based labour migration programmes for people with international protection concerns: creating more flexible, inclusive, and appropriate labour migration systems for all	18
Other business.....	20
Closure of the session	20

Abbreviations

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
JIU	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
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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

Introduction and opening of the session

1. The Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance met for its Thirty-third Session at the Palais de Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland, on 2 and 3 November 2023. The session was chaired by Mr L.A. Gberie (Sierra Leone). Three meetings were held in a hybrid format, with some participants following the proceedings online.

2. The Chairperson declared the Thirty-third Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance open on Thursday, 2 November 2023 at 10.10 a.m.

3. The following Member States were represented.¹

Albania	Denmark	Libya	Russian Federation
Algeria	Djibouti	Luxembourg	Rwanda
Angola	Dominican Republic	Madagascar	Samoa
Argentina	Ecuador	Malawi	Senegal
Australia	Egypt	Mali	Serbia
Austria	El Salvador	Malta	Sierra Leone
Azerbaijan	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Slovakia
Bahamas	Fiji	Mexico	Slovenia
Bangladesh	Finland	Mongolia	South Africa
Barbados	France	Montenegro	Spain
Belarus	Gabon	Morocco	Sri Lanka
Belgium	Georgia	Mozambique	Sudan
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Germany	Myanmar	Sweden
Botswana	Ghana	Namibia	Switzerland
Brazil	Greece	Nepal	Tajikistan
Bulgaria	Guatemala	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	Thailand
Burkina Faso	Guinea	New Zealand	Togo
Cameroon	Holy See	Nicaragua	Tunisia
Canada	Honduras	Niger	Türkiye
Chad	Hungary	Nigeria	Ukraine
Chile	India	North Macedonia	United Kingdom
China	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Norway	United Republic of Tanzania
Colombia	Ireland	Pakistan	United States of America
Congo	Israel	Panama	Vanuatu
Costa Rica	Italy	Paraguay	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Côte d'Ivoire	Japan	Peru	Viet Nam
Croatia	Jordan	Philippines	Yemen
Cuba	Kenya	Poland	Zambia
Czechia	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Portugal	Zimbabwe
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Latvia	Republic of Korea	
	Lesotho	Romania	

¹ The list of participants is contained in document S/33/15. Unless otherwise indicated, all documents and slide presentations are available on [the Standing Committee](#) section of the IOM website.

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

5. The Standing Committee noted that the Chairperson had confirmed that the credentials of the representatives of the Member States listed in paragraph 3 had been found to be in order.

Adoption of the agenda

6. The provisional agenda contained in document S/33/1 was adopted by the Standing Committee and subsequently issued as document S/33/16.

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 30 September 2023) (C/114/4/Rev.1). The total outstanding assessed contributions for 2022 and previous years and the assessed contributions still to be paid for 2023 amounted to CHF 30.4 million. Since document C/114/4/Rev.1 had been issued, payments had been received from Brazil and Ethiopia, which owed less than two years in arrears. There were 16 Member States on the list of countries subject to Article 4 of the IOM Constitution. Of those, 10 maintained their voting rights and six had lost the right to vote. Five Member States in arrears had negotiated and were following a payment plan, and thus retained their right to vote.

8. The Standing Committee took note of the contents of document C/114/4/Rev.1 and the additional information provided by the Administration; 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.

Presentation by the Director General

9. The Director General, welcoming participants to the Standing Committee's Thirty-third Session, delivered the statement contained in extenso in document S/33/13. Her presentation also covered document S/33/INF/1, on the application of the Internal Governance Framework, and document S/33/7, which provided an update on risk management.

10. The Standing Committee observed a minute of silence in memory of the more than 70 United Nations' personnel and all other persons killed in the recent conflict between Hamas and Israel and in other conflicts around the world.

11. Speakers welcomed the Director General to her new post and expressed appreciation for her efforts to engage with Member States on key matters, including her strategic priorities and the Programme and Budget. The focus on climate change and human mobility, regular pathways and data was commended by many speakers, particularly given their alignment with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

12. There was an urgent need to promote regular pathways – for example through international and bilateral cooperation agreements – to facilitate labour mobility, reflecting demographic and labour market realities, while also preventing brain drain in countries of origin, and to increase efforts to protect the rights of migrant workers in countries of destination. It was essential to prioritize funding

in the area of climate change and human mobility, with a focus on strengthening joint analysis and information-sharing, developing adaptation and resilience strategies, harmonizing and developing approaches and mechanisms at subregional and regional levels, and developing coherent approaches, in collaboration with other actors, such as UNHCR, to address the challenges of migration movements in the context of sudden- and slow-onset natural disasters. A number of speakers stressed the importance of also focusing on gender equality and the needs of women migrants in all spheres of migration, and on migrant protection.

13. Representatives looked forward to the issuance of the strategic plan for 2024–2028, welcoming the Director General's commitment to enhancing country and regional representation within IOM, strengthening internal accountability and oversight systems, increasing transparency and efficiency in the use of funds, expanding funding sources, such as fundraising from the private sector, and strengthening the regional and country offices. It was important that the forthcoming strategic plan and the Strategic Results Framework was aligned. Some speakers noted that the ongoing roll-out of the Framework was a key step towards results-based budgeting, while one requested more information on the Framework and suggested that such strategic initiatives should be subject to governing body endorsement.

14. The progress made to date in the implementation of the Internal Governance Framework was also praised, with speakers welcoming the next phase of internal governance reform and underscoring the importance of ongoing monitoring of the implementation process, together with adequate oversight by relevant structures, such as the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee and the External Auditor. A number of speakers also applauded the Organization's approach to risk management, in particular in its responses to humanitarian emergencies worldwide and its efforts to document best practices. One speaker encouraged the Administration to draft a risk appetite statement for endorsement by Member States.

15. In terms of budget reform, delegates noted with appreciation that the additional funds resulting from the second year of implementation of Standing Committee Resolution No. 31 of 28 June 2022 on investing in the core structure of IOM had been allocated to, among others, strengthening country offices. It was important to balance pressing needs and limited resources through judicious prioritization. The focus on developing partnerships with the private sector was also welcome. Moreover, speakers highlighted their States' provision of flexible or unearmarked voluntary contributions, and encouraged others to follow suit.

16. The ongoing review of the organizational structure was of interest for a number of Member States, and specific emphasis was placed on the need to combat sexual exploitation and abuse and improve capacity in the following areas: oversight; investigation and internal audit; risk management; human resources; and donor engagement capacity. A number of representatives also highlighted the importance of multilingualism and the linguistic policy of the Organization. Many speakers drew attention to the results of the 2022 MOPAN assessment, which had highlighted the Organization's flexibility and agility as a key strength. The results of that assessment should be used to guide IOM's actions in the coming years.

17. Several speakers urged IOM to do its utmost, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors, to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. One speaker welcomed IOM's launch of an appeal for funding to respond to the situation and encouraged donors to contribute.

18. Responding to the points and questions raised, the Director General explained that a meeting to review the Organization's strategic plan for the period 2024–2028 – convening Chiefs of Mission, Resource Management Officers, Regional Directors and directors of departments – had recently been

held in Türkiye, a location chosen to highlight the importance of work in the field. Stressing the importance of cooperation and partnerships and noting her role as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, she provided a brief overview of coordination and cooperation efforts within that framework, including work on a common strategy and approach, with input from each member organization. Welcoming comments on the importance of protecting migrants, their human rights and dignity, she said that, under the leadership of the Deputy Director General for Operations, work was under way to develop a protection strategy, through a consultative process involving thousands of stakeholders and covering five pillars: leadership, accountability, capacity, advocacy and partnership. Member States would be contacted for their input before the strategy was finalized.

19. Recommendations from an assessment currently under way by the Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee would be taken on board to improve performance relating to the Internal Governance Framework and risk management. Looking ahead to the next iteration of the Internal Governance Framework, it was important to adopt a more sophisticated approach, including applying a set of organizational and management indicators to the entire Organization, taking on board the outcomes of the MOPAN assessment and evaluations by key Member States, and the results of the third global staff survey, to set new goals and management indicators for IOM as a whole.

20. While Member States established policies and laws on migration, the private sector was directly involved in recruitment, as well as investment and innovation activities, with an interest in ensuring a sustainable workforce. It therefore made sense to include the private sector in the Organization's strategy, building partnerships in order to create an ecosystem that benefited more people. In that context, a goodwill ambassador programme had been launched to raise awareness – including of migration success stories – and highlight the benefits of well-managed migration policies and programming.

21. While the IOM leadership fully supported multilingualism, it was nevertheless important to adopt a broader approach, looking beyond the official United Nations languages. An unfortunate, unintended consequence of the linguistic policy to date had been a sharp decline in recent years in eligible candidates from Asia, East Africa and the Pacific region for key leadership positions within the Organization. Measures were being taken to amend that policy to ensure equitable representation.

22. Five Member States, one of which spoke on behalf of a group of Member States, exercised their right of reply in response to the statements of two other Member States during the discussion. One of the Member States concerned thereafter exercised its right to respond to the right of reply.

23. The Standing Committee took note of presentation of the Director General and documents S/33/INF/1 and S/33/7.

Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2023

24. The Standing Committee had before it a document entitled Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2023 (C/114/7) for consideration, to be read in conjunction with the Programme and Budget for 2023 (C/113/7) and the Revision of the Programme and Budget for 2023 (S/32/6).

25. The Administration reported that the Administrative Part of the Budget remained unchanged at CHF 65,352,240, as indicated in document S/32/6. The Operational Part of the Budget had increased from USD 2.37 billion to USD 3.34 billion, and OSI had remained at USD 174.9 million, as stated in document S/32/6. Document C/114/7 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 OSI budget would be achieved.

26. One Member State representative requested that future summary updates include figures for the amount of OSI generated to date. He further requested that IOM report data in respect of drawdowns from the OSI reserve.

27. The Standing Committee recommended that the Council take note of the Summary update on the Programme and Budget for 2023 (C/114/7).

Programme and Budget for 2024

28. In her introductory remarks, the Deputy Director General for Management and Reform ad interim said that IOM's rapid growth in recent years reflected the need for the Organization's assistance and support. It was important to continue to strengthen IOM's management and accountability systems to adjust to that growth, in line with the requests by some Member States. That growth was set to continue; the number of IOM staff was projected to reach 20,500 by the end of 2023, and approximately 21,500 by the end of 2024.

29. The Administration gave a slide presentation highlighting the key points set out in the document entitled Programme and Budget for 2024 (C/114/6). The Administrative Part of the Budget totalled CHF 77.1 million, an increase of CHF 11.7 million compared to the 2023 revised budget, as a result of implementation of Standing Committee Resolution No. 31. The Operational Part of the Budget was based on confirmed funding and was estimated at USD 1.8 billion, which was approximately USD 574 million more than at the same point for 2023. The budgeted overhead income was USD 178 million, while the guaranteed overhead income was USD 103 million, which left a gap of USD 74.2 million to be generated before the end of the budget year. The OSI budget level projected for 2024 was USD 210 million, which was a pragmatic estimate considering that the levels of OSI actually generated had exceeded those budgeted since 2021.

30. The increase in the total core budget for 2024 compared to 2023 was USD 47.1 million and was funded predominantly by OSI (73%), with only 27 per cent covered by Member States' assessed contributions. When it came to distribution of that extra income, one of the priorities of the Director General was the delivery of IOM's activities, which meant that 50 per cent of the costs of Chiefs of Mission and Resource Management Officers would be covered by the core budget, despite the staggered increase to the Administrative Part of the Budget approved in the Standing Committee Resolution No. 31.

31. Member States expressed appreciation for the transparent budget production process and the consultations held with regional groups in that regard, and the timely issuance of the document. Another welcomed the high level of transparency of the budget document, in particular the detailed staffing table and breakdown by object of expenditure and trusted it would be maintained in the future.

32. Speakers generally commended IOM's efforts to ensure that the available resources were used efficiently and effectively, with one adding that alignment with objectives of the Global Compact should be a primary consideration in the prioritization process. Another suggested that IOM should engage Member States more meaningfully in the priority-setting process from the Programme and Budget for 2025 onwards. A third wished to know how IOM would strengthen its gender-based approach across its projects and whether the allocated resources were considered sufficient.

33. The focus on climate mobility, regular pathways and solutions to displacement was welcomed, with the representative of a regional group and some Member States encouraging IOM to provide more support to Member States in areas such as bilateral labour agreements, promotion of the use of safe, regular and legal pathways, diaspora engagement, climate change adaptation, drought mitigation and early warning and disaster preparedness.

34. A number of speakers expressed support for the Director General's vision of reaching out to non-traditional donors, including the private sector, in an effort to mobilize resources and highlighted the importance of providing more unearmarked funding to allow IOM to reach those areas most in need of support. IOM should clearly communicate the benefits of unearmarked funding in order to attract more donors. Attention was also drawn to the need to increase funding available for the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism.

35. The representative of a regional group was joined by one Member State in noting with deep concern a decrease in funding for the Regional Office in Pretoria and requesting clarification on that point. Another representative expressed support for the decision to consolidate certain resource management functions in his region into one office in Panama, and requested information on the expected savings. A third State reiterated its concerns relating to budgetary allocations that were not commensurate with the magnitude of the hosting costs of migration in a single country.

36. Member States also expressed support for the continued focus in 2024 on strengthening country offices through covering at least 50 per cent of the costs of Chiefs of Mission and Resource Management Officers at country level, and on reinforcing core functions. Nevertheless, one Member State suggested that additional consideration should be given to the staffing levels of the Office of the Inspector General to align with current and future pressures on investigative functions. However, more information was requested on how the independent analysis of the organizational structure would be conducted, and on its specific objectives. A briefing on the process and the results would be welcome.

37. One Member State said that the Administration should consult with the governing bodies on the expected transition towards results-based budgeting and requested more information on inflation data and sources, and on how inflation and cost-of-living adjustments were accounted for. He was joined by another speaker in requesting more information on the Organization's cybersecurity capacity, and stressed the importance of providing the necessary resources to combat and prevent cases of fraud. A number of representatives also looked forward to receiving the efficiency report on the progress made in implementing Standing Committee Resolution No. 31.

38. The Administration, responding to the points raised, said that the Organization would continue its transparent approach and was always open to bilateral discussions for any clarifications that were needed. It should be noted that the Organization did not make direct allocations to projects. It was only when funding was confirmed that IOM could implement activities.

39. In terms of the consolidation of certain resource management functions in the Latin America and Caribbean region into one office in Panama, the savings had largely been made through natural attrition – when staff members left IOM, their posts were not filled but consolidated into the new structure in Panama. Turning to the question about the Regional Office in Pretoria, certain resource management functions had been consolidated in the Regional Office in Nairobi to achieve efficiency gains, based on the model employed successfully in the Latin America and Caribbean region to enhance efficiencies. With regard to investigations and internal audit, a number of additional posts in the Office of the Inspector General had been created, as detailed on page 15 of document C/114/6. It was difficult to recruit staff for the investigation and internal audit functions; in 2023 the Administration had approved funding for consultants to help with the backlog of cases but that did not come under the

core budget. It should also be remembered that the budget reform was a staggered process; core funding for additional positions would continue to become available up until 2027.

40. With regard to the question on inflation data, most of the costs related to staff and offices. For staff costs, IOM followed the ICSC salary scale, which already accounted for inflation. Office costs were determined by local service providers; they were not very significant and were paid as the need arose. Cash management, which could be challenging because of the different currencies involved, was reviewed by the Treasury Risk Committee. Regarding cybersecurity, Member States had approved a drawdown from the OSI reserve mechanism over the past three years to invest in that area; in addition an external consultant would review the current cybersecurity situation and provide guidance on the way forward.

41. The Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism had never reached the intended balance approved by Member States when it had been established. If the mechanism was now considered to be a priority, Member States might wish to consider how to contribute to it. Under current rules funding from OSI was not justified as the Mechanism was not part of the core structure.

42. Lastly, while work had already started on results-based budgeting, it could not be implemented until other prerequisites had been met, which was expected to be around 2025, when the Strategic Results Framework was in place and the new enterprise resource planning system had been rolled out. Updates on that matter would be provided.

43. The Deputy Director General for Management and Reform ad interim added that while the cybersecurity system was fairly robust, in view of IOM's rapid growth, additional financial and human resources had been allocated to strengthen the ICT network and counter any cybersecurity risks. Updated details would be provided in 2024.

44. Before concluding on this item, the Chairperson recalled that the Programme and Budget for 2024 had been prepared based on the existing structure while an independent analysis of IOM's organizational structure had been mandated by the Director General. He expressed gratitude to the Director General for having briefed regional groups on the organizational review and for the continued efforts on the part of the Administration to strive for an organizational design that strengthened accountability for results and optimal use of resources. He also observed that the initial required structural adjustments at Headquarters would be implemented early in 2024, while the review of the organizational structure in the field would continue until the second quarter of 2024.

45. The Standing Committee took note of the Programme and Budget for 2024, as set out in document C/114/6, and recommended that the Council approve CHF 77,113,216 for the Administrative Part of the Budget and USD 1.8 billion for the Operational Part of the Budget. It also recommended that the Council invite the Director General to proceed with the necessary adjustments to the organizational structure, within the limits of available resources, taking into account the views expressed by Member States, and to report on any such adjustments at the next Standing Committee session.

Provisional workplan for the IOM governing bodies during 2024

46. The Director General, introducing the document entitled Provisional workplan for the IOM governing bodies during 2024 (S/33/12), said that a special session of the Council would be held during the first half of 2024 to inform Member States of her selections for the positions of Deputy Director General for Operations and Deputy Director General for Management and Reform. Moreover, during the 115th Session of the Council, an election would be held to appoint the External Auditor for the years 2025, 2026 and 2027.

47. The Standing Committee took note of document S/33/12.

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

48. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled Report on the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations (S/33/3), outlined the three types of external audit – certification, performance and compliance – undertaken by the External Auditor. Most of the 39 outstanding recommendations were either long-term strategic recommendations or operational recommendations, which required time and resources to implement. Various recommendations in respect of certification were being addressed through the Internal Governance Framework, and the goal was to finalize the implementation of other such recommendations through the new enterprise resource planning system in 2024. With regard to country offices, different levels of maturity impacted the efforts required to address audit recommendations, particularly those related to challenges encountered because the Organization did not have adequate privileges and immunities arrangements in place. The Organization was committed to acting on all recommendations, the majority of which were expected to be implemented by the end of 2023.

49. One Member State representative expressed concern about the funding for the internal audit function and the lack of growth in the function since 2016. He also requested continued updates on cybersecurity, including on how the drawdown of USD 4 million from the OSI reserve was being spent on critical improvements, and asked for the outstanding recommendations that were of the highest priority for the Organization to be identified in future progress reports. A second speaker asked how the Administration kept track of the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations and proposed that an oversight system open to Member States be introduced, while a third enquired whether the Administration would have sufficient resources to implement the outstanding recommendations within the timeline. She encouraged IOM to prioritize recommendations likely to result in cost savings, as well as those associated with institutional performance.

50. Responding to questions from the floor, the Administration said all recommendations were of equal priority and that delays in their implementation related not only to funding but also to time constraints, the introduction of the new enterprise resource planning system, and country regulatory processes. There was an internal system for keeping track of the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendations, while the confidential nature of some recommendations meant that more thought was required in relation to an oversight system open to Member States. With regard to funding for the internal audit function, three new internal audit positions had been approved in the Programme and Budget for 2024.

51. The Standing Committee took note of document S/33/3.

Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General

52. The Officer in charge of the Office of the Inspector General, introducing the document entitled Report on the work of the Office of the Inspector General (S/33/4) prepared by the former interim leadership of the Office of the Inspector General, said that during the reporting period there had been 62 internal audits and 1,551 cases had been processed and closed by the investigation function. The number of allegations received by the investigation function had increased to 1,931, as compared with 1,184 during the previous reporting period. The Officer in charge welcomed the addition of positions for the investigation function, for which recruitment was currently under way, and noted that three additional positions for internal audit had been included in the Programme and Budget for 2024 (C/114/6).

53. Two Member State representatives expressed concern about the rise in the number of cases and formation of a backlog, while acknowledging that possible factors included enhanced reporting and accountability mechanisms, broader awareness of the We Are All In platform, and the increase in the size of the Organization. There was a general request for more information on the nature of the cases. Several speakers expressed concerns in respect of the low level of resources and the lack of funding for the internal audit function since 2016, with one observing that the internal audit functions of similar-sized United Nations agencies with similar mandates were better resourced, and another requesting information on the effectiveness of the delocalized nature of the internal audit structure. One representative expressed particular concern over the vacant positions of Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General.

54. One speaker asked how the Office cooperated with the External Auditor to ensure efficient oversight coverage. He stressed the need to address recurrent internal audit findings and urged the Office to prioritize the investigation of fraudulent activity. He encouraged the Office to include the results of key performance indicators in future reports and suggested that a separate agenda item for evaluation be considered. Another speaker requested separate donor briefings on substantial audit reports and findings.

55. Several Member States stressed the importance of the Organization's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. One representative emphasized the need for a victim-centred approach, while noting that implementation of the framework for responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment continued to vary across operations, and a second representative expressed concern about inadequate staffing levels in that regard.

56. The Director General, acknowledging the staffing shortages in the Office of the Inspector General and emphasizing the Organization's commitment to filling the positions as soon as possible, observed that the insufficient staff numbers in legal and human resources functions impacted capacity to implement the recommendations emanating from the Office. A highly experienced ad interim Inspector General had been appointed and there were 61 dedicated focal points in respect of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

57. The Officer in charge of the Office of the Inspector General, in response to points raised, said that most allegations of misconduct related to fraud and corruption and that there had been a slight increase in sexual misconduct allegations. The suggestion to include a breakdown of case categories in the annual report was noted. Although greater efforts to create a culture of speaking up and reporting were reflected in the increased number of allegations, there was a need to improve transparency and communication to ensure that staff members and beneficiaries understood the role of the Office. Standard operating procedures had been developed to strengthen the Office's activities, including on a victim-centred approach. With regard to sexual misconduct, the work of the Office was one element of the broad and multilayered response required. An effort was being made to fill vacant positions with qualified and experienced candidates and, in terms of the backlog of cases at the Intake stage, the Office was endeavouring to address and process incoming reports. The Office would be included in the organizational review, to ensure that it was properly equipped to meet the future needs of a large organization with evolving risks.

58. A representative of the Office of the Inspector General, reiterating the need for sufficient funding for the internal audit function and responding to questions from the floor, noted that the Office collaborated closely with the External Auditor in terms of risk assessments and annual work plan implementation, and that there was an internal system of key performance indicators for internal audit activity; discussions were under way on the inclusion of those indicators in the results-based management framework. In respect of systemic issues, the representative noted recent management actions to address systemic issues identified in internal audits, such as a delegation of authority

framework and policy updates related to supply chain management and implementing partners. The Office had enhanced its reporting to the Business Transformation initiative in the hope that the systemic issues and their root causes would not be repeated when the new enterprise resource planning system was implemented.

59. The Standing Committee took note of document S/33/4.

Report of the IOM Audit and Oversight Advisory Committee

60. 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 2022 to August 2023 (S/33/10). During the reporting period, discussions in the Committee had covered a variety of areas, including: internal audit and investigations; risk management; strategic planning and organizational performance; finance and treasury; central evaluation; legal affairs; human resources and the work of the Ombudsperson; external audit; and possible engagement with the Joint Inspection Unit. The Administration and the Committee had also reviewed and updated the Committee's terms of reference to better reflect its advisory role. Future work of the Committee would focus on areas including: a review of the 2024 risk-based internal audit annual plan; incorporation of the topics of diversity and inclusion, and the Sustainable Development Goals, into internal audit concepts and strategies; results-based budgeting; integrated reporting; a multifunctional response towards misconduct, including fraud, and institutional learning; integrated conflict management; a review of regional and country operations; and the rotation policy.

61. The representative of one Member State asked whether the Committee might consider adding an overview of the recommendations it addressed to the Director General, including their status; in addition, a separate overview of the implementation rate of other oversight entities' recommendations would be in line with United Nations' best practices. He would also be interested to hear the Committee's opinion on the risks associated with the IOM Headquarters building project, as well as its views on IOM's after-service health insurance liabilities, which was a major concern in the United Nations system. He expressed strong support for participation in the Joint Inspection Unit and welcoming the Committee's intention to focus on fraud, expressed support for the development of a dedicated and publicly available anti-fraud policy. Another representative said she would be interested to hear the Administration's response to the Committee's recommendation that the Chief Risk Officer conduct a risk assessment on IOM's overall financial reporting process as part of its annual workplan and, to the concern expressed by the Committee about the proposed rotation of the Chief Risk Officer.

62. The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee, responding to the points raised, said that the Committee would be addressing the issue of the Headquarters building project early in 2024. Since the start of 2023, the recommendations made by the Committee to the Director General were included in the action log that the Committee shared with the Administration and the External Auditor, and which the Committee would be very happy to discuss at the meetings between the Committee and Member States. The Chairperson also agreed to include the topic of IOM's after-service health insurance liabilities into the agenda of one of the upcoming meetings. With regard to the Joint Inspection Unit, in the context of the changes being made to the Office of the Inspector General and the considerable funding constraints, the Committee had suggested that it was not the right time to become a participating organization, but that at a later time it might be advisable. Also cost considerations played a role, given the budget constraints at IOM. Given the criticality of the role of Chief Risk Officer, the Committee had proposed that rotation of the incumbent be delayed, especially in view of key staff repeatedly leaving the team for more attractive positions.

63. The Director General commended the voluntary work carried out by the Advisory Committee and the valuable insights it provided to IOM's leadership. On that note, recalling her commitment to building a representative Organization, she encouraged Member States to identify candidates for key vacant positions, namely the Inspector General, Deputy Inspector General and Ombudsperson. The Organization was only as good as its people: candidates should therefore be qualified, absolutely committed and believe in the work and mission of IOM.

64. The Standing Committee took note of document S/33/10.

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

65. The Legal Counsel introduced the document entitled Tenth annual report of the Director General on improvements in the privileges and immunities granted to the Organization by States (S/33/5), which covered the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023, through a slide presentation. She recalled that Article 23 of the IOM Constitution established the legal basis for those privileges and immunities and further noted that in Council Resolution No. 1266 of 26 November 2013, 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 2023, the number of relevant States and places granting such privileges and immunities had increased from 83 to 104.

66. To strengthen IOM's privileges and immunities, the Organization would continue to work with States to develop bilateral agreements. The Director General proposed that the Standing Committee request the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities to consider the recurring challenges to IOM's privileges and immunities, with a view to identifying options for future consideration by the Standing Committee.

67. The Director General said that she would be grateful to all Member States for their cooperation in ensuring that IOM's privileges and immunities were fully respected throughout the world. The Organization was spending significant amounts of money because those privileges and immunities were not respected in 82 Member States. She encouraged Member States to take the issue very seriously and work towards a better outcome for all.

68. The Standing Committee took note of document S/33/5 and requested the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities to consider the recurring challenges faced by IOM with respect to its privileges and immunities, with a view to identifying options for consideration by the Standing Committee. It also 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

69. The Administration gave a slide presentation highlighting the key points set out in the document containing the ninth update on plans for the IOM Headquarters building (S/33/6). The schedule was currently on track. IOM was ready to submit the official request for a construction loan of CHF 66.3 million to the host State before the end of 2023; the reply was expected by 2025 and the loan agreement was expected to be signed in early 2026. In 2024, a building permit would be required from the host State, which would take approximately one year to be processed. In 2024 and 2025, the procurement strategy and documents would be finalized, and opportunities for temporary premises

to move to in 2025 identified. The preliminary work should begin in early 2026, and the foundation stone would be laid during the third quarter of 2026. Construction would continue through 2028, and the move into the newly commissioned building would take place in stages from January until April 2029.

70. The project budgets were structured in three sections: the construction budget (CHF 72 million, for which the construction loan would be used); the budget covering the furniture, swing move and project management (paid by IOM); and the budget covering the possible financial impact of risks (paid by IOM if occurring, but with no associated increase in Member State contributions).

71. Two representatives requested clarification on the increased estimates for ICT and business continuity costs and maintenance and running costs, as stated in the annex to document S/33/6, with one also asking how those maintenance costs were estimated and how they could be covered. The other further asked whether the costs associated with inflation, to be borne by IOM, would be used for construction work, and if so whether that would comply with the terms of the loan. He would appreciate clarification on how the project would be financed. Another representative asked what the specific plan was for IOM's three-year relocation to temporary premises, hopefully with no adverse effects on the functioning of the Organization. He encouraged the mitigation and reduction of risk estimate costs and welcomed the new building's compliance with accessibility requirements.

72. The Administration, responding to the questions raised, said that the original 2020 estimate for ICT and business continuity costs had been very general and not based on the specific design. Furthermore, in 2020 the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of the Organization were not yet known. The revised estimate of CHF 4,342,000 for ICT and business continuity was based on the needs of the actual project, as discussed with the specialist architects and engineers, taking into account all the required new meeting room equipment, systems and software. The revised estimate for maintenance and running costs was, similarly, now based on exact calculations of costs in terms of building maintenance, commodities, waste management and so forth, whereas previously the estimate had been a very general one. With regard to risk mitigation, IOM had been able to learn from the experience of other international organizations, especially since its architects had partnered with the architect responsible for the Médecins Sans Frontières building, which was very similar to the new IOM building. Costs related to risks were therefore expected to decrease rather than increase. Potential temporary premises were still being assessed, with the aim of keeping any disruptions to IOM's work to a minimum; a number of premises would be ready for the Organization to move to by the end of 2025, and progress in that regard would be reported on at the following session.

73. The Standing Committee took note of document S/33/6.

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

74. The representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the Working Group on IOM Partnerships, Governance and Organizational Priorities, noted that since the Standing Committee had met in June 2023, the Working Group had held one meeting, during which it had considered the following topics: the implications of IOM participation in the JIU and the ICSC; the proposal from India for enhancing social security of migrant workers and identifying gaps in the global supply of and demand for skills; and a joint proposal from Germany and Rwanda, on behalf of the African Group, on climate change and mobility.

75. The Chair of the JIU had given a presentation outlining the Unit's mandate and activities and had responded to Member States' questions, which were principally related to the costs of JIU membership and the process to be followed should IOM decide to become a member. Those Member States taking the floor had expressed support for the JIU and IOM's potential membership and had requested the Administration to provide further information on the costs and next steps for further consideration by the Working Group.

76. With regard to ICSC membership, the Administration had explained that the internal contractual review process had been completed and the new contractual framework approved by the Director General. That framework had brought IOM closer to the ICSC framework and would start to be implemented in a phased approach over three years from 2024. The Working Group had requested the Administration to provide updates on the implementation of the new contractual framework.

77. Regarding the proposal by India, Member States had welcomed the continued consideration of the topic and had supported its continued discussion by the Working Group. The Administration had provided an update on its efforts in the areas of portability of social security benefits and global skills gaps and had drawn attention to its collaboration with key stakeholders, such as the ILO. It had been proposed that the topic be revisited by the Working Group at its next meeting and presentations on that topic should be made by both IOM and the ILO.

78. Lastly, with regard to the joint proposal by Germany and Rwanda, on behalf of the African Group, regarding climate change and mobility, it had been agreed to place the topic on the agenda of the Working Group and that the proposal would be further outlined by the previously mentioned Member States.

79. One representative said he welcomed the progress made in the discussions on the possible participation of IOM in the JIU; the presentation given by the Chair of the JIU had clarified outstanding questions and it should now be possible to define a road map, with a timeline, towards a decision by Member States in 2024.

80. The Standing Committee took note of the presentation.

Update on human resources management

81. The Administration gave a slide presentation on key developments in human resources management from 2022 to 2023. The Organization's global workforce numbered some 20,000 people, representing 177 nationalities, with a relatively low percentage of International Professional category staff. The vast majority of staff came from non-OECD/DAC countries, except in the international Professional category at senior levels, namely P-5 to D-2, where only 63 nationalities were represented, and two thirds of staff came from OECD/DAC countries. Gender representation by grade was relatively equal up to the P-4 level, but women were underrepresented at the senior levels, with men occupying 58 per cent of positions at P-5 level and above. New appointments planned at the D-1 and D-2 levels would help to redress the balance at those levels. The Administration was focusing on redressing those imbalances.

82. The Organization had been developing its people strategy for 2024–2028, with the roll-out planned after the launch of the Director General's strategic plan for the same period. Other key activities and challenges in 2023 had included: the time-consuming implementation of the new Oracle enterprise resource planning system; the dissemination of the results of the third global staff survey; the review of the rotation process; the development of a new contractual landscape; preparatory work on a comprehensive leadership programme; a stronger focus on diversity initiatives; and the expansion

of the Pathways Pool initiative as part of succession planning, focusing on non- and underrepresented Member States, in line with the recommendations emerging from the recent MOPAN assessment.

83. Challenges for 2024 and beyond, in addition to the roll-out of the enterprise resource planning system and aspects of the Internal Governance Framework, included contractual reform, which included moving from 18 to nine different contract types without impacting the Organization's agility, and IOM's participation in the United Nations reform process, including its impact on human resources management. There were plans to modernize and simplify the Organization's human resources policy, and to ensure medical and well-being support for staff. It was also important to focus on and invest in both the strategic and foundational aspects of human resources. There were funding gaps and missing functions that needed to be addressed, such as the role of artificial intelligence in human resources solutions. Other areas that required attention included career development, workforce planning, compensation and benefits.

84. The results of the most recent global staff survey had been generally positive; the Organization had either performed equally well or better in certain areas than in the 2021 survey. For example, IOM had performed well with respect to staff awareness of the Organization's mission and goals; channels for reporting unethical behaviour or misconduct; staff pride in their workplace; and team cooperation, but had not performed as well in areas including handling underperforming staff members appropriately; helping staff to deal with stress; ensuring fair, transparent and inclusive selection processes for professional development; helping employees to achieve a good work-life balance; providing access to informal training; and ensuring that staff were not exposed to unacceptable levels of stress. The most significant contributing factor in the survey was the location staff were working in. It was also worth noting that, compared to other United Nations organizations, IOM had performed well above the benchmark median, particularly with regard to informal training and reporting misconduct.

85. Looking to the future, it was important to ensure that the IOM workforce was involved in implementing the new strategic plan. Further investment was needed, including in regional human resources business partners, learning programmes and performance management. It was also important to focus on reforming the contractual landscape, enhancing diversity, tackling the problem of non- or underrepresented Member States, and improving the support provided to staff.

86. The Director General noted that the Organization would soon be hiring new staff for a range of positions. The recruitment process would focus on diversity, in particular geographical diversity.

87. During the ensuing discussion, one Member State representative noted that, in order to ensure meaningful feedback, it would have been useful to circulate the information contained in the presentation in advance. In order to achieve full gender parity it was important, in addition to addressing the underrepresentation of women in higher level positions, to look into their overrepresentation in other categories. He enquired whether the people strategy would be submitted to Member States for review prior to roll-out. With regard to statistics, it would be useful to have data broken down by Member State and post occupied. One delegate requested information on what share of the workforce were living with a disability, what measures were in place to integrate them, and whether the Organization had a strategy to that end. Another delegate encouraged the Administration to inform delegations when vacancy notices were posted, so that they could pass on the information.

88. The Administration noted that although it had focused on higher-level positions, with a meaningful traction on the work of the Organization, the aim was to achieve gender balance at all levels. The Administration would be happy to organize consultations with interested Member States to discuss the people strategy. The new performance management system was innovative, involving quarterly reviews to simplify goal-setting and reporting, with holistic end-of-cycle feedback. The

recruitment process always placed an emphasis on integrity and geographical diversity and was aligned with the Director General's aim of attracting staff living with disabilities. The people strategy also covered disability inclusion, including accessible advertising of vacancies. In order to recruit and better integrate staff living with disabilities, funding for reasonable accommodations was available. Obtaining data on disability in the workplace was a challenge, however, as people did not necessarily wish to declare that they were living with a disability. While steps were being taken in the right direction, more remained to be done. The resources were not currently available to systematically share all vacancy announcements; however, Member States were encouraged to regularly check the vacancy lists, which were published weekly.

89. The Committee took note of the presentation by the Administration.

Statement by the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association Committee

90. The Chairperson of the Global Staff Association Committee gave an oral presentation, supplemented by a number of slides, highlighting the priorities for the period 2023–2024. The Global Staff Association Committee supported the Director General's people-first approach, stressing the need to uphold staff rights and ensure fair treatment.

91. For the period 2023–2024, the Global Staff Association Committee's priorities had focused on several key areas. The first was to ensure recognition of and support for the work of democratically elected staff bodies, namely the Global Staff Association Committee and the National Staff Association Committees. These Committees were working with the Administration on a strengthened recognition agreement; successful decision-making needed to be based on accountability and fair, transparent, participatory processes. Welcoming the efforts of the Administration and progress made to date on IOM staff contracts, benefits and entitlements, including the contractual reform announced by the Director General, the Chairperson stressed the need to review contract modalities to improve job security while maintaining the Organization's operational flexibility. Staff needed to be able to contribute to, and benefit from, social security. A clear contractual framework would enhance transparency and ensure fair treatment.

92. The Global Staff Association Committee supported the Administration's efforts with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion, and career development. To improve staff retention, the Administration needed to invest in training opportunities, nurture in-house talent, provide a wider range of career development options and develop clear career pathways, all of which were of particular relevance during restructuring processes.

93. The Global Staff Association Committee stood ready to cooperate with the Administration to strengthen the internal justice system, in order to foster a culture of trust, accountability and fairness. Reforms needed to focus on early conflict prevention and enhanced informal conflict resolution, as well as on tackling all forms of discrimination.

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

Exchange of views on items proposed by the membership

95. Prior to presenting the two topics for discussion, the Deputy Director General for Operations briefly referred to the document entitled IOM Development Fund – Status report: 1 January to 30 September 2023 (S/33/9). She expressed appreciation for the over USD 17 million made available in 2023 to support developing Member States, from which 59 States had already benefited. Project

funding requests showed an increasing focus on migration, the environment and climate change, as well as projects supporting Member States to develop migration-related policies.

96. Noting the importance of the IOM Development Fund in addressing the root causes of, and the challenges associated with, migration, a Member State representative expressed appreciation for the support that his country had received from the Fund and encouraged future cooperation. A second representative highlighted that the Fund was a mechanism to support initiatives that filled in the gaps of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

(a) Delivering impact through data for action, insight and foresight

97. The Deputy Director General for Operations said that, at a time when challenges were more interconnected than ever and global needs surpassed the capacity to respond, data analytics to prevent and anticipate early action played a pivotal role. IOM had produced the first ever Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement, reflecting the Organization's commitment to evidence-based solutions and offering a comprehensive analysis of the factors that could empower internally displaced people to move towards durable solutions. IOM was also working to foster global understanding of migration flows and trends along major corridors worldwide, aiming to inform policy coordination and provide the evidence base to create, expand and improve regular pathways. Climate change was reshaping migration patterns, and decision makers must be equipped with reliable evidence to take effective, anticipatory action. IOM was using cutting-edge climate change and migration models to offer valuable insights into mobility outcomes under different possible future scenarios, which could be used in collective efforts to address the pressing needs of communities on the front lines of global change.

98. The Administration introduced the document entitled *Delivering impact through data for action, insight and foresight (S/33/8)*, supplemented by a slide presentation. Living in a world full of data, information was not just about numbers and statistics; it was also about people and solutions and opportunities. Addressing the global challenges required real-time data and solid analysis to guide actions to build the future sought.

99. In 2023, IOM was working in three areas: data for action, data for insight and data for foresight. In the first area, the first Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement – aimed at delivering evidence-based data to support long-term planning – would be launched at the end of November 2023. In the second area, data analysis of demographic challenges and employment opportunities, and of where people were available to work, would help to bridge some of the pressing demographic challenges and opportunities faced across the developing and developed world. In the third area, data analysis and modelling would facilitate identification of some of the emerging risks and opportunities, and the piloting of a horizon-scanning approach would inform operational decisions and provide a tool for dialogue and planning. Preparedness was more effective and helped to deliver climate-resilient sustainable solutions for everyone.

100. During the ensuing discussion, many Member States expressed appreciation for the increasing importance IOM attached to the collection and better use of data to inform decision-making and the planning and implementation of migration policies through sound evidence and analysis in a data-driven approach. Two speakers said that migration data were a critical tool for access to safe, regular, orderly migration, and a solid database, with real-time briefs and analytical products, was indispensable to support policymakers and decision makers. Building global capacity to use data for migration policy and humanitarian assistance decisions was a vital next step. One Member State said that data-driven approaches could also advance important dialogue and action on matching the skills of migrants to available opportunities in countries of destination, as well as measuring their impact and contributions to economic growth and development in their societies. Another Member State

pointed out, however, that data alone were not enough, hence the importance of continuing to work to ensure the quality and comparability of data; the aspiration was to make IOM the primary source of statistics and foresight on migration at the international level. With regard to the first periodic Global Report on the State of Internal Displacement, one Member State urged IOM to coordinate its findings with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre for cohesion in data collation and governance on internal displacement.

101. One Member State and the representative of a regional group welcomed the whole-of-corridor approach that went beyond simple root analysis, focusing on the movements of people and the associated risk and vulnerability; such analysis further revealed the opportunities and positive changes emerging through migration, such as diaspora engagement or remittances. The representative of a group of Member States supported the focus on collecting data at the global level on the link between climate change and mobility and bringing together experts from all around the world to reflect on the medium- and long-term impact, with a view to strengthening IOM's ability to predict and respond proactively to mobility in that context.

102. Several speakers welcomed that IOM's Data Strategy 2020–2025 had enabled it to have a more strategic course of action to enhance its data system. The representative of a group of Member States valued the commitment to gender equality as a fundamental principle in the Strategy and was joined by a Member State in welcoming the collection and analysis of gender-responsive data by the Global Data Institute, which would be crucial to implement a human rights-based approach to migration. The same Member State noted with appreciation the creation of the new Gender and Migration Research Policy Action Lab.

103. The representative of one regional group called on IOM to better disseminate the results of the Displacement Tracking Matrix, the Missing Migrants Project and the Migration Governance Indicators. Three speakers looked forward to the new interactive data analysis tools planned for launch in 2024 that would facilitate global, real-time understanding of migration movements and trends and provide profiles of people on the move across corridors, including climate-related movements, with two further representatives requesting training on the tools. A dedicated migration intelligence platform, in particular, would act as a "one-stop-shop" to facilitate the dissemination of analytical results. A representative of one regional group called for even greater interactivity of these tools, to improve data collection on migrant demography and provide global, real-time understanding of the multidimensional and cross-cutting nature of the migration phenomenon, migration flows and trends in order to ensure an evidence-based public discourse on migration and generate a more realistic, humane and constructive perception of migrants.

104. The representative of a group of Member States fully supported IOM's efforts to explore and develop foresight and foster a forward-looking culture; the pilot exercise on horizon scanning was promising as a channel to pick up and reflect signals of possible emerging trends at the global level in the transition from reactive to proactive migration management. Moreover, a representative of one Member State observed that efforts to expand IOM's foresight capacity would help Member States to move from a primarily reactive approach to migration management to one that anticipated and created options for the safe, orderly and regular movement of migrants. Another Member State cautioned that forecasting was only worthwhile if data available were used to inform policies and drive timely anticipatory action.

105. Speakers encouraged IOM to work closely with national statistics offices and other relevant partners, such as data institutions in Africa. The representative of a group of Member States called for efforts to strengthen and bring together existing data collections, explore avenues to harness the potential of innovative data and methodologies and pool different expertise worldwide to increase the

accuracy of analysis. She also encouraged further cooperation with other aid organizations to increase interoperability and avoid duplication.

106. The Administration, responding to issues raised, said that working together was paramount. IOM had regional offices and the Global Data Institute included regional data hubs; Member States were encouraged to collaborate with the data teams in their regions. IOM would indeed coordinate its findings with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and, in most of its work on solutions to displacement, the Organization was collaborating not only with civil society but also United Nations agencies. IOM could provide Member States with training on the tools under preparation.

(b) Adapting skills-based labour migration programmes for people with international protection concerns: creating more flexible, inclusive, and appropriate labour migration systems for all

107. The Deputy Director General for Operations said that regular routes fostered more inclusive communities and generated greater opportunities for economies and societies. The more people could be matched with opportunities, the better the economic, social and cultural outcomes. Labour pathways offered an innovative way to leverage the skills and talents of people while providing potentially lasting solutions to their protection needs and harnessing the potential of migration to create opportunities and prosperity for all. To realize the potential of labour mobility for people in need of international protection was to acknowledge that existing regular pathways failed to accommodate the growing demands for skills and/or workers. To address the issue required joint, multistakeholder efforts, with strong government, private sector and civil society collaboration.

108. The Administration gave a slide presentation introducing the document entitled *Adapting skills-based labour migration programmes for people with international protection needs: creating more flexible, inclusive and appropriate labour migration pathways for all (S/33/11)*, which outlined opportunities and challenges in respect of skills-based labour mobility programmes. By facilitating the movement of people from countries of first asylum to countries where their skills were in demand, skills-based labour migration pathways could simultaneously address the economic needs of destination countries and offer solutions in respect of the 37 million people estimated to be outside their home country and in need of international protection.

109. A skills-based approach to migration spanned humanitarian and labour migration policy ecosystems, as well as international instruments such as the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. A number of countries were piloting programmes that combined skills-based migration with international protection to identify barriers to access faced by people with international protection needs, as well as potential solutions. Member States were encouraged to advocate the creation of further innovative pilots and to promote dialogue among interested government, civil society and private sector partners through existing platforms such as the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility

110. Overcoming barriers and harnessing the potential of skills-based labour migration pathways required policy coherence with existing programmes, to which end the Organization would use global platforms, including its role as coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, to raise awareness of the risks and the unintentional consequences that the pathways might have. IOM was working closely with UNHCR and Member States to promote refugee labour mobility as a third-country solution additional to resettlement, and the two organizations were also facilitating labour mobility solutions as part of a broader route-based approach to respond to the transnational challenge of mixed movement. The Organization sought to broaden engagement beyond the traditional humanitarian and resettlement sector by, for example, mapping actors in the non-humanitarian space and identifying entry points for advocacy and engagement.

111. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the document, highlighting its comprehensive nature and the clarity of the analysis, while others welcomed the leadership of IOM in respect of the Displaced Talent for Europe project and the Africa-EU Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership. It was generally agreed that well-managed labour migration pathways could enhance the lives of people in need of international protection and contribute to economic growth in countries of origin, transit and destination; complementary labour pathways were a new and innovative tool in that regard that had transformative potential when undertaken alongside traditional vulnerability-based pathways.

112. Various representatives spoke about the steps that their respective governments had taken to adapt skills-based labour migration programmes for people in need of international protection. Measures included simplifying the process of obtaining work permits and waiving skills assessments and minimum work experience requirements. Two representatives urged other Member States to join the Global Task Force to become part of the global conversation about inclusive labour pathways, highlighting the Global Refugee Forum 2023 as an opportune time to learn more about the matter at hand.

113. Additional barriers in respect of skills-based labour migration pathways were noted by a number of Member State representatives and included access to travel documents, the deskilling of highly skilled migrants and the lack of fair wages. One Member State representative encouraged the Organization to go beyond the proposals outlined in the document and determine what needed to be done to make major migratory routes more accessible for people with international protection needs. A second representative emphasized that complementary pathways should neither replace nor undermine vulnerability-based programmes. A third representative stressed the importance of creating conditions for return so as not to foster the systemic emigration of skilled persons, and a fourth asked whether seasonal migration pathways for people in need of international protection had been considered.

114. Many representatives echoed the need for continued cooperation among Member States and with international organizations to advance progress towards an equitable, inclusive and prosperous world in which the skills and potential of individuals with international protection needs were recognized and valued. Another representative encouraged the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative strategies for recognizing migrants' skills and qualifications, and a third proposed that IOM facilitate bilateral and multilateral dialogue with a view to putting in place enabling legislation, policies and agreements, as necessary.

115. Representatives commended the Organization's collaboration with UNHCR, with one welcoming the efforts of the two organizations to address various concerns in situations of mixed movement and another asking for further information in respect of the framework for cooperation; any approach combining skills-based migration and international protection should be based on the objectives set out in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

116. The Administration welcomed the positive reactions and encouragement of Member States in respect of skills-based labour migration pathways. With regard to questions raised, UNHCR was a natural partner with whom IOM was working to revise its engagement framework. Apropos of seasonal work for people in need of international protection, safeguards against refoulement would need to be put in place.

117. The Standing Committee took note of documents S/33/8, S/33/9 and S/33/11 as well as comments made by Member States.

Other business

118. At the suggestion of the Chairperson who recalled the note on the appointment process for the Deputy Directors General, circulated on 13 July 2023 and also observed that the appointment process may extend beyond six months, the Standing Committee agreed to recommend that the Council authorize extending the contract of the Deputy Director General for Operations until the appointment process of the Deputy Directors General was finalized.

Closure of the session

119. The Chairperson declared the Thirty-third Session of the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance closed on Friday, 3 November 2023, at 1.25 p.m.