

# International Agency for Research on Cancer

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Organization**

**Governing Council  
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## **PLANS FOR IARC 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN 2015**

1. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) was created in May 1965 following Resolution WHA18.44 of the 18<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly. As intended, over the last five decades IARC has collaborated with scientists across the world to conduct high quality cancer research to better understand the occurrence, natural history, causes and prevention of cancer. In addition, the Agency has maintained an extensive programme of education and training to build capacity in cancer research worldwide.
2. The Agency held celebrations on the occasion of its 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries and, in addition, at the time of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1990 a Technical Report was published, which summarizes the key events and documents leading to the establishment of IARC. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated on 10–11 May 2005, immediately prior to the Governing Council meeting, with a scientific symposium and ceremony at the Agency attended by local dignitaries and Governing Council members, followed by a reception at the City Hall in the evening.
3. It is proposed to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary by a series of events intended both to record and celebrate the history and achievements of the Agency and also to point towards the future, emphasizing the relevance and role of the IARC mission in the coming half century. Three main components of this programme are described below.

### **IARC, the first 50 years: 1965–2015**

4. The origin of the Agency is rooted in the high ideals of the proposal by France to the World Health Organization to create an international agency to work in a collaborative manner to fight cancer worldwide. In responding to the French intellectuals who presented their idea to the President, General Charles de Gaulle spoke of the three-part vocation of such an agency: cooperation among peoples; improvement of the human condition; and advancement of science. The IARC Participating States by the end of 1965 comprised: Australia, France, Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.
5. IARC occupies a unique place in the history of cancer research, both as a result of its position within the United Nations family and because of its global mission, set from the beginning, to study cancer worldwide. This mandate saw the Agency conduct innovative investigations into

the patterns and causes of cancer (at the time referred to as “geographic pathology”) on a global scale. In doing so, IARC built an unprecedented network of international collaborators which has continued to grow over the decades.

6. In order to celebrate the achievements of the Agency, its personnel and many collaborators as well as to highlight the support and vision of its Participating States, a book is being prepared for publication in 2015, tentatively entitled: “IARC, the first 50 years: 1965–2015”.

7. This book is aimed at a general, non-specialist readership and will comprise a short history of IARC followed by a series of features which highlight areas of major contribution to cancer research over the last 50 years, e.g. in relation to specific cancers such as cervix and liver as well as Agency programmes including the global cancer statistics, IARC Monographs and the Fellowships programme. The text will be illustrated with photographs, personal insights from investigators, extracts of original documents, etc. The book will also contain extracts of a series of face-to-face interviews being conducted with past IARC personnel and collaborators, which will serve as a partial oral history of the Agency. The book will comprise about 150–170 printed pages and will also be available in e-pub format. A French translation of the book will be produced.

8. The existing detailed technical document describing the formal creation of the Agency, published in French only as IARC Technical Report No. 6 and co-authored by Professor R. Sohier and A.G.B. Sutherland, will be translated into English as part of the 50-year celebrations and will provide a valuable complement to the new book.

9. Aside from the celebratory value of “IARC, the first 50 years: 1965–2015”, it is also envisaged that the publication will act as a strong endorsement of the mission, values and vision of the Agency in relation to future collaborators, donors and potential new IARC Participating States.

### **Official Ceremony of IARC 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

10. The 57<sup>th</sup> session of the IARC Governing Council in May 2015 offers an occasion to formally celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IARC. It is proposed to mark this occasion with events on the Wednesday, immediately prior to the Governing Council. This would be an opportunity for Governing Council members to join with IARC personnel, past and present, to reflect on the achievements of the Agency.

11. The event would be conducted in close cooperation with the French authorities at the local, regional and national level in order to recognize the strong and sustained support to IARC from the host country throughout its history.

12. On the Wednesday morning the Agency would host a symposium at its own premises comprising three keynote speakers who would present their research on themes directly relevant to the core activities of IARC. The speakers would each be presented with the IARC Medal of Honour to recognize their contributions to cancer research. The welcome address would be given by the IARC Governing Council Chair and Vice-Chair. The proceedings would be available as a webcast to allow former personnel, collaborators and friends of IARC to follow proceedings.

13. In the evening the Agency will approach the local French authorities to organize a reception in the City of Lyon for the Governing Council members with the anticipated presence of the Mayor of Lyon, the President of the Grand Lyon, the President of the Region Rhone-Alpes, the Prefet of the Rhone, together with other local dignitaries and representatives of the French Government. The WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan would also be invited to attend. The reception would be open to current IARC personnel and others who have previously worked at the Agency and are able to attend in person. The format would be a series of short speeches on the establishment and value of the Agency followed by a cocktail reception.

**IARC Scientific Conference: “Global cancer occurrence, causes and avenues to prevention”**

14. In order to promote cancer research for cancer prevention and to launch the vision and directions for research at IARC beyond the first 50 years, the Agency is planning a major international scientific conference structured around its core research themes, which have already been promoted through the World Cancer Report 2014 and will be reflected in the forthcoming Medium-Term Strategy 2016–2020. Specifically the major themes will be: 1) the global occurrence of cancer; 2) the causes of cancer; 3) the prevention of cancer and 4) implementing cancer prevention and early detection. The conference would seek to bridge cancer research through to cancer control and policy.

15. The three-day conference will be held in Lyon in spring 2016 with around 500 participants. In addition, webinar facilities will be used to allow a maximum number of scientists and other interested individuals worldwide to benefit from the main presentations. The conference will feature keynote lectures from leading scientists, as well as smaller themed workshops and symposia.

16. It is intended to include additional features such as career development sessions for early career scientists and possibly opportunities to meet with representatives from funding agencies to encourage dialogue between scientists and funders. The programme will be developed in conjunction with an international Scientific Advisory Committee.

17. The conference organization will be handled by an outside specialist company. A registration fee will be charged to offset the costs of the conference. However, the Agency aims to attract sufficient sponsorship from the public sector to permit the participation of 50 scientists from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) through provision of travel bursaries – “50 for 50” – one for each year of IARC’s commitment to training in cancer research. Side events may include a leadership training and networking for the scientists from LMICs. More generally sponsorship for the conference will be sought from long-term partners of the Agency including national cancer institutes, cancer societies, Participating States, etc.

### **Request for support**

18. The Governing Council is asked to comment on the plans for the celebrations of 50 years of IARC. The Director also requests the Governing Council to allocate up to 150 000€ from the Governing Council Special Fund to permit: a) the production, printing and translation of the book "IARC, the first 50 years: 1965–2015" and translation of the earlier technical document on the origins of IARC (up to 50 000€); b) to support planning of the international conference on cancer causes and prevention, including engagement of a professional conference organizer, the guarantee of reservation of venue, etc. (up to 100 000€).

19. This request for the conference support is made on the basis that a maximum of costs would be recovered through external funds and registration fees and any unused portion of the allocation would be returned to the Fund.

20. The Director also requests individual Participating States to consider making voluntary contributions to support the organization of the conference, including the possibility to specifically designate part of the funds for the "50 for 50" bursaries for scientists from LMICs.