

## **STATEMENT BY THE IARC STAFF ASSOCIATION**

1. The aim and mission of the Staff Association Committee (SAC) is to assist Staff working at the Agency and represent them before the Administration, relaying their questions, doubts and opinions and seeking to find solutions to issues raised. I wish to thank the Governing Council for giving us the opportunity to address you each year.
2. Since December 2013, when the Committee became operative once again, the SAC has attended the 2014 Global Staff Management Council (GSMC) meeting, as well as the 2014 and 2015 FICSA Council Sessions. Taking part in these meetings has enabled us to re-establish ties with other WHO and UN Staff Association Committees; ties that were weakened by the interruption of the SAC and the unfortunate high turnover of its members.
3. At the beginning of 2015, confirmation of the agreements required for the budget and building of the 'Nouveau Centre' were announced. In a few years' time, the IARC will be moving into this 'Nouveau Centre', still located in Lyon, but now in the Gerland district. As this confirmation was eagerly awaited and Staff were worried about its possible new location, this announcement was met with relief by all Staff, in particular those recruited locally who feared for the stability of jobs if the Agency were to leave Lyon. However, the layout of the future premises, especially the much-feared introduction of open spaces, continues to concern Staff as this will have a direct impact on working conditions.
4. In December 2014, the SAC launched its biennial Work Climate Survey. Proposed anonymously to all Staff, this exercise is useful for pinpointing expectations. Comparing data obtained from successive surveys enables us to highlight points that have improved or worsened and passing these results onto the Administration enables it to also gain a clearer picture of the issues or intensify its actions.
5. It is worth noting that between the 2013 and 2015 surveys, improvements were recorded in the following areas: knowledge of procedures in the event of harassment (marked 3.8/5), information on IARC strategy (3.7/5), cooperation between the scientific and administrative sections, equal treatment of all staff members and opportunities for developing new skills, although there remains room for improvement (3-3.3/5 for these subjects). On the other hand, work satisfaction, working conditions and the trust in work by supervisors fell slightly.

6. The results of this survey also show that the most positive point is pride in working at IARC (4.4/5). Staff feel they are equally treated (men/women and within demographic groups). 18 people, or 12.2% of respondents, reported they had been harassed in 2014 and this remains a concern for the SAC. However, even though a question on harassment was asked in the previous Work Climate Survey, it is unfortunately impossible to compare results as the type of responses proposed were different.

7. Furthermore, it would appear that the 360° evaluation exercise introduced by the Administration, in which some staff members assessed their first-level supervisors, did not have a great deal of effect, despite the work the Administration performed upstream with supervisors. Indeed, in response to the question "Following the 360° exercise, have you seen any improvement within your team?", the average reply was only 2.7/5. In 2014, in response to a question from the SAC, the Administration replied that no new 360° exercise was envisaged. The SAC would however like the Administration to launch an enquiry among Staff to assess the medium-term impact of the 360° evaluation (after 3 years, for example).

8. The Work Climate Survey also showed that Staff consider the level of cooperation within the Agency to be very good and several comments asked for more shared activities or events within the IARC aimed at bringing staff together, improving conditions, work climate and cooperation. To this end, the SAC highly publicized the "United Nations Inter-Agency Games", an event in which some members of staff took part 10 years after the last IARC participation. We sincerely thank the Administration, which supported this initiative by offering two extra days paid leave to Staff taking part (subject to agreement by their supervisors), but we regret that some supervisors refused to allow members of their group this opportunity.

9. In 2013, the Administration suspended the Classification Review Committee (CRC), deeming that on account of the high number of applications submitted to the Committee, this process was unfair and too costly. It was replaced by a system requiring the restructuring of an entire Group, cost-neutral for the payroll, before a position can be considered for reclassification. In June 2013, the Director, in response to the results of the 2012–2013 Work Climate Survey, announced that this system would be reviewed in 2015 "to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Agency and guarantees a reasonable career progression for staff". 2015 has arrived and the SAC will be watching to ensure this announcement is followed through.

10. It was in this context that several groups in the Agency were restructured in 2014, resulting in a tense work climate throughout the process, which was long and highly stressful for the Staff involved. This restructuring led to two people leaving the Agency after many years of service and two people re-allocated to positions with tasks very different to those of their previous jobs. The SAC has therefore asked the Administration to improve its communication, as regards both quantity and frequency, with groups concerned by future restructuring.

11. At the beginning of 2015, the Administration introduced generic job descriptions for laboratory technicians working in the Agency, setting out the types of tasks to be performed by the various General Service (GS) grades. This staff category was the first in IARC to benefit from this approach, but the Administration has informed us that grades and job descriptions will be reviewed for other categories of employees. Eventually, all Staff should be concerned by these generic job descriptions. For forthcoming reviews, the SAC has asked the Administration to ensure that supervisors of the jobs concerned are consulted from the outset and are strongly encouraged to play a more active role, to facilitate the process and contribute their experience to the subject.

12. The second recommendation of point 11 of the report on the 13<sup>th</sup> GSMC (October 2014) supports the idea of the occasional use of tele-working in WHO. Ms Françoise Nocquet, WHO Human Resources Director, also backed this plan and during her February 2015 visit invited the IARC to implement a tele-working policy. The SAC strongly supports this idea, which it has been discussing with the Administration for several years and proposes introducing within the Agency. As regards this issue, the Administration has asked the SAC to work with it on developing a tele-working policy at IARC.

13. New elections are due to be held next June and as each year, we hope to find enough candidates to ensure the long-term future of the Committee and the sustainability of its actions.

14. Undoubtedly, a great deal of work remains and new, additional work issues will emerge for the forthcoming Staff Association Committee. Representing staff is very rewarding, but requires investment. There are many difficulties, including disagreements and a difference in interests with the Administration (although we welcome the constructive work between our parties), a lack of time and the diversity of issues covered by the SAC, but the main difficulty faced by SAC members is probably that of representing Staff fairly and in line with their expectations. We hope to have done this correctly and to have presented their ideas here as fairly as possible. Once again, we thank the members of the Governing Council for listening to us and giving us the opportunity to address the Council.