

## **DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 51<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL**

1. The contribution of the Scientific Council to the work of the Agency is greatly appreciated in relation both to evaluation of activities and advice on future plans.
2. Coordination between the Governing and Scientific Councils is ensured by regular joint teleconferences of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of both Councils with the Director, and by the invitation of the Chairs of each Council to each other's Council sessions.

### ***The IARC Interim Annual Report 2014 and standard reports***

3. The Director presented the Interim Annual Report, illustrating the activities in the main areas of the Agency's programme, presenting a selection of the key results published in the previous year and updates on some of the major projects.
4. The Director notes with satisfaction the congratulations of the Scientific Council on the Agency's achievements over the past year.
5. The Scientific Council received and noted the documents entitled: "Report of the meeting of the 56<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council" (document SC/51/3) and "Director's update from the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Scientific Council" (document SC/51/4), without additional comment.

### ***Biennial Report of the IARC Ethics Committee (IEC), 2013–2014***

6. The report on the activities of the IEC over the previous biennium was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Dr Béatrice Fervers. The IEC Chair provided clarifications to questions from the Council on ethical guidelines adopted by the Committee and on its role in the handling of potential conflicts of interest.
7. The Director noted the Scientific Council's satisfaction with the report of activities of the IEC. The Director also expresses thanks to the IEC and its Chair for their support of the work of the Agency.

### ***Production of Standard Reports***

8. The Director outlined a proposal to review the production of standard reports submitted to the Scientific and Governing Councils, to consider whether the demands on the Agency resources may be diminished by discontinuing reports that are considered of limited utility. The Director raised a question about the value of the Interim Annual Report in this context.

9. The Scientific Council proposed to create a joint Scientific and Governing Council Working Group to review with the IARC Secretariat the current list of standard reports and to advise on any changes. The Scientific Council Vice-Chair and one other Scientific Council member volunteered to participate in this Working Group. The Governing Council Chair also accepted to join the Working Group.

10. The Director welcomed the creation of the joint Working Group and looks forward to receiving its recommendations. Any changes recommended by the joint Working Group will be submitted to the Scientific and Governing Councils for their respective endorsement and approval.

### ***Director's response to the Reviews of the Sections of IARC Monographs (IMO) and Molecular Pathology (MPA), held in January 2014***

11. The Scientific Council congratulated the IMO Section on the re-launch of the Handbooks of Cancer Prevention and noted the importance of coordinating these with production of relevant WHO publications. The Scientific Council further suggested increasing the time available for senior scientific staff within IMO to carry out research.

12. The Director is continuing to search for voluntary contributions to finance the Handbooks; discussions are continuing with WHO on how best to link the Handbooks with the WHO guideline development process. A number of research opportunities are being identified for IMO scientists while maintaining a balance with the core requirements of the Monograph programme.

13. The Scientific Council noted the need for sustainable additional resources to enable the MPA Section to efficiently accomplish the broad scope of the planned activities across the WHO "Blue Books" and research on brain cancer. The Director specified the efforts being made to increase revenues from the "Blue Books" and the additional resources which have been made available to the Section to increase the rate of publishing of the remaining volumes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

14. The Director noted with satisfaction the Scientific Council's recognition of the positive actions taken to address the points raised by the IMO and MPA Section reviews.

### ***The Gambia Hepatitis Intervention Study (GHIS): future plans***

15. Dr Ramatoulie Njie, GHIS Group Head, presented an overview of this study, conducted over the last 30 years as a partnership between IARC, the UK Medical Research Council and the Government of The Gambia. Dr Njie also presented plans for the next phase of collection and analysis of results from the GHIS and reported on ancillary studies developed in parallel to GHIS.

16. The Director noted with satisfaction the Scientific Council's opinion that the GHIS is on track to achieve its main objectives and thanked the Council for the helpful and constructive suggestions in response to the requests for guidance on the future directions.

***Biennial report of the activities of the Education and Training Group (ETR), 2013–2014***

17. Ms Anouk Berger, ETR Group Head, presented the report of activities and achievements of the ETR programmes over the previous biennium, and provided clarifications to questions on the access to training at IARC for junior scientists from low- and middle-income countries and on the increasing use of e-Learning resources.

18. The Director noted the Scientific Council's satisfaction with the report of ETR activities and welcomed the recommendation to align the presentation of future ETR Biennial Reports to that of the IARC Biennial Reports.

***Assessment of the utility of the new scoring system for reviews***

19. A new six point scale was introduced for the Section peer-reviews in 2014 and 2015 replacing the previous four point scale, to provide a broader range of options for the scoring. The Scientific Council recommended that the new scale be maintained and its implementation monitored. It further recommended that more detailed guidelines be provided to reviewers on the review process and on the implementation of the new scoring system.

20. The Director welcomed the Scientific Council's endorsement of the new scoring system and in particular the recommendation that the education and collaborative components and the public health impact of IARC's activities should be taken into account by the reviewers.

21. The IARC Secretariat will prepare additional guidelines for reviewers to ensure that the full scope of the IARC mission is understood and considered by peer-review panels.

***Update on the "Nouveau Centre" project***

22. The Scientific Council expressed concern over the continuing uncertainty over the commitments to finance this project, and over the adverse impact on the Agency's activities and budget of remaining in the current building for longer than previously planned.

23. The Director thanked the Scientific Council for its support of this project and assured the Council that the Agency was actively working with its partners at local and national level to secure a solution regarding the funding of the "Nouveau Centre". An update on the current status is provided in document GC/57/12.

***Purchase of scientific equipment***

24. The Scientific Council unequivocally recommended that the Governing Council approves the proposed requests for purchase of scientific equipment, emphasizing the importance of the type of equipment requested to the core activities of the Agency.

25. The Director welcomed the endorsement by the Scientific Council and asks the Governing Council to consider the request presented in document GC/57/11A.

***IARC policy on open access publishing in scientific journals***

26. Ms Teresa Lee, Knowledge Manager, presented the new policy. The Scientific Council recommended a balanced approach, prioritizing papers with a wide distribution or significant impact for open access publication. In addition the Scientific Council supported the request to establish a financial provision from the Governing Council Special Fund for open access publication of a limited number of high priority scientific articles where other financing options are unavailable. It further recommended that the implementation of the Open Access policy be reviewed in two years' time.

27. The Director noted the Scientific Council's recommendations and welcomed the encouragement to pursue open access publication. The Director furthermore requests the Governing Council to consider support for the open access publishing of a limited number of high priority papers as presented in document GC/57/10.

***Draft IARC Medium-Term Strategy for 2016–2020, including implementation plans***

28. The Scientific Council enthusiastically complimented the Agency on the breadth and scope of the draft Medium-Term Strategy and on the wide consultation conducted during its development. The Council noted the underlying key values and principles, recognizing a unique strength of IARC in relation to the inter-disciplinary approach to cancer prevention.

29. The Council encouraged IARC in its provision of guidance with respect to public policies on cancer prevention and control. The increased investment in evaluation and implementation of cancer prevention and control strategies was supported. The Agency was also encouraged to continue to work with WHO in defining and broadening the noncommunicable diseases (NCD) strategy with respect to cancer, recognizing the requirement to consider a timeframe beyond 2025 for many cancer control strategies.

30. The Scientific Council emphasized peer review as the mainstay by which progress against the Medium-Term Strategy should be assessed. The need to consider impact on public health programmes and policies as well as capacity-building was also highlighted.

31. The Scientific Council recommended that the Governing Council approve the IARC Medium-Term Strategy for 2016–2020 as presented in document SC/51/12.

32. The Director welcomes the strong endorsement from the Scientific Council of the draft Medium-Term Strategy. Based on the comments received, the Director added emphasis on the role of IARC in shaping cancer prevention and control in the context of the global NCD agenda.

33. The Director requests the Governing Council to adopt the IARC Medium-Term Strategy for 2016–2020 as presented in document GC/57/7.

***Proposed Programme and Budget (2016–2017)***

34. The Scientific Council endorsed the changes in the presentation and structure of the programme and budget documents, namely grouping projects according to six high-level objectives following the structure of the IARC Project Tree, rather than the previous three appropriation sections, and the alignment of the Programme and the Budget in two year cycles. These changes were made to provide a clearer link between the Agency's scientific programme, resource allocation and overall strategy and priorities.

35. The Director welcomed the Scientific Council's endorsement of the proposed priority areas of investment, and its recommendations that the Governing Council adopt the Proposed Programme and Budget and that the regular budget should be financed exclusively from assessments on Participating States.

***Scientific Peer-Review of the Sections of Infections (INF) and Mechanisms of Carcinogenesis (MCA)***

36. The Director thanked the peer-review panels and the Scientific Council for their constructive comments and recommendations, and noted with satisfaction the high ratings received by both Sections for the scientific quality of their past work and future plans, as well as for the perfect fit with the Agency's mission and strategy.

37. Responses to the suggestions and comments coming from the peer-review will be addressed over the coming year and the Director will report back on these actions at the next Governing Council meeting.