

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

1. On behalf of the Staff Association Committee (SAC) I would like to thank the Governing Council for giving me the opportunity to make this presentation today to tell you about the activities of the Staff Association during the past year.
2. The main aim of the SAC is to assist Staff working at the Agency and relay their questions, doubts and opinions to the Administration as needed. When an issue is raised by a staff member, we try to find the answer to their question or orient them towards someone who can. We also participate in the recruitment, reassignment and selection of staff and organize a variety of social activities, both sporting and recreational, throughout the year that contribute to the health and well-being of the personnel.
3. At the last General Assembly of IARC Staff Association in June 2015, three new committee members were elected, one existing member was re-elected and two members stepped down having completed their two-year term of office. This means that we now have nine committee members and the continuation of the Staff Association is assured for the time being.
4. The present Committee meets every two weeks to discuss any matters that have been raised by staff members, any events that may affect the staff here at IARC and also plans for upcoming social and recreational activities.
5. New activities that began this year include weekly Pilates and theatrical improvisation classes and first aid training courses with a view to obtaining the "Prevention and Civil Emergency Level 1 (PSC1)" certificate. All three activities have generated a lot of interest.
6. Unfortunately staff recreational activities were disrupted for several months following the terrorist attacks in Paris due to reinforced security measures that prompted the administration to convert the staff room R13 into a classroom for the language classes. We hope that sufficient space will be allocated in the new building to avoid this kind of situation occurring in the future.
7. In July 2015, the SAC Chair and Vice-Chair attended the inaugural Global Executive Office meeting (GEO) in Geneva. This is a new initiative by WHO Headquarters Staff Association that is supported financially by WHO administration and brings together representatives of all WHO Regional Staff Associations. The three-day meeting gave the representatives a valuable opportunity to get to know each other better, to improve interoffice communication on subjects and issues of mutual interest and to have in-depth discussions on topics of current importance. It also allowed us to reach consensus on approaches to ongoing agenda issues in preparation for the Global Staff Management Council (GSMC) meeting that took place in October.

8. The main issue discussed at the GSMC that will directly affect IARC staff is the International Civil Service Commission's recommendation to increase the age of separation for all staff to 65. This caused a certain amount of confusion and consternation when it was first announced, but now it seems clear that staff appointed before 1 January 2014 will retain the right to retire at 60 or 62 depending on the starting date of their contract.
9. Another recommendation from the GSMC that will affect IARC staff if it is brought into force, is the recommendation to extend maternity leave from 16 to 24 weeks to align WHO policies for staff members with WHO guidelines on maternal health and breastfeeding. This is currently under discussion and we expect to learn more at the next GSMC meeting.
10. The Geneva Headquarters Staff Association Committee holds regular videoconferences once or twice a month with representatives of all the regional Staff Associations during which we exchange news and views and keep track of any proposed changes in regulations and other administrative matters.
11. We were unable to send a representative from the Committee to attend the FICSA Council meeting this year because the date coincided with IARC's Scientific Council meeting; nevertheless we received all the documents and conclusions from the meeting and were able to vote for the new FICSA Council members by proxy.
12. The main concerns that have been brought to our attention in the past months have been feelings of insecurity and worry resulting from restructuring of some Sections and the abolition or redefinition of posts within these Sections. Hopefully the experience gained in the past year and feedback from the staff will contribute to a better handling of future restructuring with earlier and more complete communication.
13. The SAC were grateful to be given the opportunity to review the new IARC policy on position classification review that was published in December 2015. We are now eagerly awaiting the publication of the new teleworking policy that should be released shortly.
14. The first working meeting of the year with the Director of Administration and Finance (DAF) and the Human Resources Officer (HRO) took place on 8 March. We are pleased to report that working relations with the Administration continue to be constructive and smooth. We would like to thank David Allen for his contribution over the past four and a half years and we look forward to continuing the positive dialogue with the newly appointed Director of Administration and Finance.
15. As the Chair of the Staff Association, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues for their commitment and dedication and once again, I thank the Director and the members of the Governing Council for giving us the opportunity to address the Council today.