



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL  
TIMBER COUNCIL**

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FIFTY-NINTH SESSION  
13-17 November 2023  
Pattaya, Thailand

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY GROUP (IAG)  
AT ITS THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING**

**2 November 2023  
Virtual meeting**



**Thirty-seventh Meeting of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG)  
Virtual Meeting, 2 November 2023**

**Report of the Chairperson**

1. The Thirty-seventh Meeting of the IAG was convened virtually on Thursday, 2 November 2023 at 7 pm (JST), chaired by Dr. Mohammed Nurudeen Iddrisu (Ghana), Chairperson of the Council. The meeting was attended by Mr. Samuel Doe (Ghana), Chairperson of the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets (CEM) and the Committee on Forest Industry (CFI); Mr. Jorge Malleux (Peru), Producer Spokesperson; Mr. Yasuyuki Kobayashi (Japan), Representative of the Host Government of the Headquarters; Ms. Sheam Satkuru, Executive Director (ED), and other observer colleagues from Japan, Ms. Yoko Yamoto, Mr. Hiroyuku Saito and Ms. Akiko Tabata and senior members of the Secretariat.
2. The IAG was informed of the absence of Ms Anna Tyler (New Zealand), Consumer Spokesperson; Ms. Alicia Grimes (USA), Chairperson of the Committee Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF) and Mr. Preecha Ongprasert (Thailand), Representative of the Government hosting the session.
3. The Chairperson invited the ED to introduce the meeting agenda to the IAG after welcoming them to the meeting.
4. Following the ED's introduction to the agenda, The IAG considered and adopted the following agenda for discussion:
  - A. Brief background of the IAG
  - B. Update on preparations for ITTC 59
  - C. Status of Parties to the Agreement
  - D. Status of contributions to the Administrative Account
  - E. Filling positions of Council officers/bodies
  - F. Consideration of draft decisions/elements of decisions submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII):
    - Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LIX)]
    - Administrative Budget for the 2024 and 2025 Financial Biennium [Decision 2(LIX)]
    - ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the Years 2024-2025 [Decision 3(LIX)]
    - Management of the Administrative Budget [Decision 4(LIX)]
    - Matters related to Article 44 of the ITTA, 2006 [Decision 5(LIX)]
    - Youth Advisory Group [Decision 6(LIX)]
  - G. Other matters

**A. Brief background of the IAG**

5. The Secretariat referred to Decision 2(LI) and the Report of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) at its Thirty-sixth Meeting held virtually on 2 November 2022, as contained in document ITTC(LVIII)/2 dated 3 November 2022.

**B. Update on preparations for ITTC 59**

6. The Secretariat informed that documentation for the session was available on the ITTO website while they were still working on the programme of the opening session. The IAG was briefed on each agenda item for the 59th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), as follows.
7. *1: Opening of the session.* This will involve seven speakers—the Council Chair, Dr. Mohammed Nurudeen Iddrisu; the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ghana; and four speakers from Thailand, comprising the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Mayor of Pattaya, the Governor of Chonburi Province, and the Director-General of the Thai Royal Forest Department; and Ms. Sheam Satkuru, ITTO Executive Director.

8. *2: Ascertainment of the quorum.* The Secretariat reminded the meeting that there had been problems obtaining quorum at previous Council sessions and this would likely be the case again at this session. At present, 18 producer members were registered to attend and even if all those did attend, it would be insufficient to obtain producer quorum. Ten consumer members were registered to attend and another nine had delegated their votes to the EU or another EU country, and this is insufficient to obtain consumer quorum. The Secretariat noted that some other international organizations, in assessing whether quorum had been achieved, would do so based on members who are in good standing with the organization, but this was not the way ITTO traditionally calculates quorum, where all members are considered regardless of whether they had arrears/held votes. Changing the basis for calculating quorum to only consider members in good standing could be proposed for consideration by the Council since it would make it easier to attain quorum. The Secretariat noted that the ITTA, 2006, specifies that members should cover their own cost of attendance, but many (including some in good standing) were unable to attend for various reasons. The Council may wish to consider reforming the relevant rules in the context of the renegotiation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) 2006 to facilitate membership attendance and participation at ITTC sessions. The Secretariat reiterated that even if all members currently registered do attend, quorum would not be achieved unless other members that have not yet registered also attend.
9. The Chair agreed that the Council may need to deliberate such reforms where one potential avenue for doing so could be in the context of the renegotiation of the ITTA.
10. The Producer Spokesperson said he had received information from certain delegations saying they had the best will to participate but lacked resources to pay their travel expenses and had inquired whether it would be possible to participate virtually.
11. The Chair informed the meeting that it was possible that the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ghana, might also be unable to attend, given that he would be at the COP28. He asked whether there was a possibility of adding a virtual component to the session.
12. The ED reminded that the ITTC 59 was agreed to be a physical meeting. She further responded that it would be technically impossible to add a virtual component due to logistical, facilities cost limitations, particularly given the short time remaining before the ITTC 59 commences. Costs had risen considerably, and ITTO lacked the resources to provide for a hybrid session at this late stage.
13. *3: Adoption of agenda and organization of work.* This item is usually a formality.
14. *4: Report on membership of the Council.* The IAG noted that there has been no change to the membership since 2022. The ED informed the meeting that Canada was in the final stages of re-joining the Organization and would attend the session as an observer.
15. *5: Distribution of votes for the 2024–2025 biennium.* The Secretariat will report on the proposed distribution of votes for 2024-2025. The information is available in the Annex of Document ITTC(LIX)/1.
16. *6: Admission of observers.* The information is listed in Documents ITTC(LIX)/Info.3 and ITTC(LIX)/Info.4. The ED has reviewed the applications and the Council will decide whether to admit these observers.
17. *7: Statement by the ED.* This will be 5-10 minutes in length.
18. *8: Report of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG).* This will be tabled at the first session of Council, as per usual practice. The Council document of the IAG report will be posted on the ITTO website in all three languages prior to the start of the session.
19. *9: Report of the Credentials Committee.* The Credentials Committee will most likely meet several times during the session to review the credentials received prior to and during Council and the delegation of votes.
20. *10: Matters related to Article 19 of the ITTA, 2006.* The report of the Working Group, which is available online, will be presented by the Co-Chair/s of the Working Group.
21. *11: Matters pertaining to Article 44 of the ITTA, 2006:* The report of the Working Group will be presented by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group. This item is on the schedule during all Council Sessions except for during the opening of Council.

22. *12: ITTO Biennial Work Programme.* Under Item 12(a), a general overview will be provided by the Secretariat to Council on the implementation of the 2021-23 Biennial Work Programme (BWP), and additional presentations will be made to the Council and Committees on selected activities under other agenda items, such as on the ITTO Fellowship Programme. Under Item 12(b), the draft BWP 2024-2025 will be presented to Council for adoption.
23. *13: Matters related to Article 15 of the ITTA, 2006 on cooperation and coordination with other organizations.* The ED will present an update to the Council on this item (Council document ITTC (LIX)/9) is available on the ITTO website.
24. *14: Special Account and Bali Partnership Fund.* The Bali Partnership Fund (BPF) currently has only about USD 6000 remaining, and unless new funds are received, there will be no need to convene the Panel on Sub-account B during the session. The Secretariat sought the support of the IAG to include a recommendation to Council in their report that the meeting of the BPF will be convened only when sufficient funds become available. The IAG supported this recommendation.
25. *15: Implementation of ITTO's new financing architecture.* The ED will present to the Council on developments in the implementation of the new financial architecture and the funding raised to date under it. The presentation will be based on that made to the Advisory Board (Council document ITTC (LIX)/11).
26. *16: Reports of the Committees.* The reports, all available on the website, will be presented by the respective Chairs on the final day of the session (Friday).
27. *17: Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Council for 2024.* The Vice-Chairperson for ITTC 59, to be proposed by the consumer caucus, will be nominated, by convention, by the Producer Spokesperson as the incoming Chair. The producer caucus is to propose a new Vice-Chair, who, by convention, would be nominated by the Consumer Spokesperson.
28. The Secretariat noted that several Council officer positions are still vacant. There is currently no Council Vice-Chairperson, which is supposed to be proposed by the consumer caucus; no Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the CFA - with the Chairperson to be nominated by the Producer caucus and the Vice-Chairperson by the Consumer caucus. The Secretariat had made inquiries through the respective Spokespersons but had received no proposals to date. Other bodies also required officers, including the Credentials Committee and the Fellowship Selection Panel. By convention, the Vice-Chairperson of the Council chairs the joint session of the committees scheduled on Tuesday, 14 November 2023 and the Fellowship Selection Panel. The ED reiterated the importance of the Consumer Spokesperson liaising with the Consumer caucus in order to propose a Vice-Chairperson to the Council.
29. The ED noted that Panama had offered to serve as Chair of the CFA, but that it lacked the funds to attend the session.
30. The Producer Spokesperson noted that Panama was still seeking resources to attend, but time is short. He is still contacting focal points of other members but to date has received little response. He hopes for good news on this matter within the next week.
31. The Chair said he had received a nomination for the Credentials Committee from Ghana and would forward the name to the Secretariat.
32. *18: Dates and venues of the Sixtieth and Sixty-first Sessions of the Council and the Associated Sessions of the Committees.* ITTC 60 in 2024 will be hosted in Yokohama, likely in early December with dates to be confirmed by Japan and reported to Council. The Secretariat noted that the ITTC 61 should be held in Latin America and the Caribbean, and hopes that a member will volunteer to host the session.
33. *19: Decisions and report of the session.* The draft decisions are discussed below (under agenda item F).
34. *20: Closing of the session.* This agenda item is usually brief. The expectation is that the session will formally close by 2 p.m. on Friday.

35. The Chair said the lack of a nomination for Vice-chair of the Council is worrying. It also makes the situation of the Chair more difficult, but he will soldier on. The ED asked Japan for any insight they may be able to offer on the progress made by the Consumer caucus in proposing a Vice-chair.
36. Mr. Kobayashi informed the IAG that a meeting of the Consumer caucus is scheduled for the following week (the week before the Council session) and the matter would be discussed then.
37. The Chair thanked Mr. Malleux for agreeing to continue as Producer Spokesperson, despite stating several times his preference to retire from the post. He expressed hope that a potential replacement could be discussed at the next meeting of the Producer Caucus.

### **C. Status of Parties to the Agreement**

38. The IAG took note of the report on membership provided in paragraph 14 reporting on agenda item 4 of the Council.
39. The ED stated that Canada had informed the Secretariat that it was in the final stages of re-joining the Organization and may attend the session as an observer. It was possible the process of accession would be completed before the session but remains to be confirmed.
40. The Chair inquired about the status of the United Kingdom, given that it had now left the EU and had not been represented at the previous Council session. The ED reported that she had met a representative of the United Kingdom at the recently convened 3-Basin Summit and had had a good discussion, following on from previous discussion held with UK representatives at the One Forest Summit in Libreville, Gabon in March 2023 and again at the UNFF 18 in May 2023. Re-engagement with ITTO is being discussed on which department or office should have oversight of the Organization. The ED had invited the UK to attend ITTC 59 in the meantime but no registration has been completed/received. The Chair expressed hope that the United Kingdom would be more engaged in the future.

### **D. Status of contributions to the Administrative Account**

41. The ED reported on the status of contributions to the Administrative Account to the Advisory Board at its most recent meeting. The CFA will also review the status of contributions. The Secretariat reported that information on contributions to the Administrative Account was on the ITTO website and was updated whenever a contribution was received. As of 23 October 2023, 23 producer members had not paid their contributions for 2023 (amounting to USD 1.85 million) and two consumer members had not paid (amounting to USD 145,000). The ED reported on having had individual virtual meetings with several members from Latin America in 2022 and Africa in mid-2023 and although several members engaged, assessed contributions/arrears payments are not forthcoming for various reasons.

### **E. Filling of positions of Council officers/bodies**

42. The IAG took note of the urgent vacancies for ITTC 59 (Vice-Chairperson of the Council and CFA Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson) and also noted that four nominations each were required from the Consumer and Producer caucuses for the Credentials Committee for ITTC 59. Two nominations from the Consumer caucus were pending for the Fellowship Panel and three nominations from the Producer caucus (one from each region) were pending for the Panel on Sub-account B and the Bali Partnership Fund. Nominations were also needed for new Vice-Chairpersons for the Council and Committees in 2024. For the Council, the Vice-Chair would be nominated as Chairperson, and Producers would need to make a proposal for a new Vice-Chair for 2024, who, by convention, would be nominated by the Consumer Spokesperson. Nominations were needed from Producers for the CFI/CEM and the CFA Vice-Chairs for 2024 and from the Consumers for the CRF Vice-Chair for 2024. In addition, there were two open positions on the Expert Panel from the Producer caucus, i.e., one from Latin America and one from the Asia Pacific. The Secretariat noted that the Panel on Sub-account B would likely not be convened during the session. It usually comprises Japan, the USA, Switzerland and one representative from each of the producer regions. If that panel is not convened, then no nominations will be needed.

**F. Consideration of draft decisions/elements of decisions submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII)**

43. The IAG considered the draft decisions/elements of decisions prepared by the Secretariat pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII) as follows:
- i. Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LIX)];
  - ii. Administrative Budget for the 2024 and 2025 Financial Biennium [Decision 2(LIX)];
  - iii. ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the Years 2024-2025 [Decision 3(LIX)];
  - iv. Management of the Administrative Budget [Decision 4(LIX)];
  - v. Matters Related to Article 44 of the ITTA, 2006 [Decision 5(LIX)]; and
  - vi. Youth Advisory Group [Decision 7(LIX)].

*Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LIX)]*

44. The ED stated that, as per usual practice, this decision would detail activities and projects approved and funded by the Council and would be ready before the end of the session. Donor consultations were ongoing, and it is hoped that some projects would likely be funded at the session.

*Administrative Budget for the 2024 and 2025 Financial Biennium [Decision 2(LIX)]*

45. The ED stated that the proposed budget was unchanged in US dollar terms from the previous biennium.

*ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the Years 2024-2025 [Decision 3(LIX)]*

46. The ED noted that all activities included in the new BWP were continuing from the 2021-23 BWP.

*Management of the Administrative Budget [Decision 4(LIX)]*

47. The ED outlined the main elements of this draft decision. It had been prepared by the Secretariat based on discussions and elements agreed to under the relevant Working Group as a basis for discussion in the Council. She said this decision included a pilot trial, to commence in 2024, of a measure to allow those members that were ineligible to submit proposals because they were in arrears to submit one proposal for every two years of arrears paid, accompanied by a payment plan for the remaining arrears if the member is in arrears for more than two years. The trial would span a four-year period, and the Secretariat would report to the CFA each year on its progress. Paragraph 3 of the draft decision would abolish the provisions contained in Decision 7(XXXIII), Annex 1, Part C on measures regarding arrears to the Administrative Account. The ED noted that a number of members were yet to pay their 2023 contributions and were only one year in arrears.
48. The Producer Spokesperson said the Working Group had worked hard and had made recommendations to address the problem of Producer arrears. He asked how the proposed pilot would work: if members paid two years of arrears and were allowed to submit proposals, what was the likelihood that their projects would be funded? It could be that they pay two years of their arrears and submit a project proposal that is not financed.
49. The ED responded that this point was discussed in the Working Group, but no consensus had been reached on providing guarantees for members who start paying their arrears. The Secretariat noted that decisions on what projects and activities to be funded are taken by donors. It was also noted that, even if members made an effort to pay arrears, those that had never had arrears might consider they should be prioritized. The ED said this is a matter for Council's deliberation under the appropriate agenda item and the draft decision could be further discussed in the Chairperson's Open-ended Drafting Group. She noted that one Producer member quite recently paid ten years of arrears and even one year in advance, so it is possible, depending on individual members' willingness and political will to pay.
50. The Chairperson agreed that it is a matter of members showing a willingness to pay their arrears and regular contributions.
51. The ED said it is important for producer members to discuss the matter of political will among themselves and this discussion should continue constructively in the Council.

Matters Related to Article 44 of the ITTA, 2006 [Decision 5(LIX)]

52. The Executive Director noted that no draft of this decision is currently available. The Working Group had addressed the question of whether the ITTA, 2006 should be extended to December 2029 or a renegotiation should commence with a view to agreeing on a new agreement by December 2026. After considerable deliberation, the Working Group decided to recommend that the Agreement be extended until December 2029 where a roadmap with timelines and key elements are being proposed for Council discussions. The Working Group's recommendations would be presented as part of the Working Group's report to the Council. The Working Group had requested that no draft decision be submitted until after the Council has had the opportunity to discuss the Working Group report at Council. The Secretariat would have a skeletal draft ready for when the Council is ready to discuss a draft decision.

Youth Advisory Group [Decision 6(LIX)]

53. The ED introduced this draft decision as a follow-up to matters discussed at the ITTC 58 under the Progress Report on the Implementation of Decision 7(LVII) – Matters related to Article 15 of the ITTA 2006 on cooperation and coordination with other organizations. It is proposed that a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) be created, based on text used and intentions for similar decisions to establish the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) and the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG). The International Forestry Students Association (IFSA) was mentioned as an example of a youth constituent, but the proposal is to include others and create an open-ended advisory group to contribute to the work of the Organization. Under the draft decision, an event would be held at the 60th session of the Council to launch the YAG. The draft decision should also refer to ITTO Fellows, which constitutes a considerable resource for the Organization and provided a strong link with young professionals.
54. The Producer Spokesperson said the YAG should be part of the Organization's strategy to promote its policy work and agreed that the draft decision should mention the Fellowship Programme, which itself should be boosted to give more opportunities for young people to contribute to sustainable forest management.
55. Mr. Kobayashi inquired about the necessity to create a youth advisory group in the Council, given that inputs from youth could be provided through usual contacts between the Secretariat and youth groups. He asked about the cost of establishing the YAG, noting that the Organization's budget was very limited, especially given the looming cost of renegotiating the ITTA.
56. The ED said she fully understood the need to be prudent with funds, but the YAG would be a powerful means for increasing ITTO's relevance and visibility. For example, youth are very active on the international platform and on social media. She said many young people were interested in ITTO's work, and youth is an important group to be working with, particularly in the current climate. She had mentioned at the previous session that she would be requesting Council approval to establish a youth advisory group this year, and it would be difficult to explain if this did not happen. She noted that the proposed funds of USD 50 000 might be sufficient to span the YAG's first two years. She suggested various constructive ways in which the group could provide inputs to the Organization's work.
57. The Chair agreed that establishing the YAG was an important step, mentioning that he had seen how other organizations were increasingly involving youth.
58. Mr. Kobayashi asked whether it was necessary to have a group specifically focused on youth when there was a wide range of other interests, such as wood users and academics.
59. The ED responded that the views of wood users are already being obtained through the TAG, and the Organization had ongoing relationships with academia through the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, CIFOR-ICRAF, and several other institutions of further learning. Hence, she saw no special need for an advisory group for academics. Young people lacked a strong voice in some ITTO member countries, and creating the YAG would send a signal that ITTO takes the views of youth seriously, especially when youth have already benefitted from some of ITTO's implemented projects.
60. Mr. Kobayashi queried whether CSAG would be an appropriate platform for involving youth more in the Organization's work.



62. The ED said that although this is possible, it would not give youth a platform of their own. Creating such a platform would boost confidence in the Organization and make it more relevant to the future.
63. The Chair said most IAG members agree that the YAG would help project ITTO in a positive light. Nevertheless, it is an issue that could be further discussed in the Council where obtaining the support of the host nation would be key.
64. The IAG recommended the following list of decisions to be considered for adoption by the Council at its Fifty-ninth Session:
  - i. Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LIX)]
  - ii. Administrative Budget for the 2024 and 2025 Financial Biennium [Decision 2(LIX)]
  - iii. ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the Years 2024-2025 [Decision 3(LIX)]
  - iv. Management of the Administrative Budget [Decision 4(LIX)]
  - v. Matters Related to Article 44 of the ITTA, 2006 [Decision 5(LIX)]
  - vi. Youth Advisory Group [Decision 6(LIX)].
65. Draft proposals for these decisions (except the first and fifth) are included in Annex A to this report.

#### **G. Other matters**

66. The Secretariat suggested that the Council may wish to consider whether it would be appropriate for appointments to Council positions to be made for bienniums, given the recent problems experienced in filling such posts.
67. The Chair of the CEM/CFI asked whether the Secretariat was able to arrange for delegates to Council sessions to obtain visas on arrival in the country hosting the session, because this was one of the challenges that delegates needed to overcome to attend and one reason for low attendance. For many members, the process of obtaining visas was cumbersome, costly and time-consuming. He noted that his delegation was yet to receive an invitation letter from the host country for the 59th session.
68. The Chair noted that one of the requirements he needed to fulfil to obtain his visa was to provide a police clearance certificate.
69. The Secretariat said they are well aware that obtaining visas is difficult for some countries and they have done and will do whatever they can, but visa requirements are the prerogative of the host country and the Secretariat has no influence on this. The Secretariat has always raised this issue in discussions on Council sessions, but it is ultimately in the hands of the host country.
70. The Chair said he appreciated the support of the Secretariat but it was largely out of its hands. Countries differed in their immigration rules, and most countries had strict requirements for countries in Africa.
71. The ED suggested that another, potentially complementary measure could be for Council to consider moving Council sessions to earlier in the year (for example June or July) when governments still have travel budgets. The latter part of the calendar year is becoming increasingly competitive (including both human and financial resources) due to several other major international meetings taking place in November/December, such as the CBD COPs or the UNFCCC COPs taking place around the same time every year.

#### **H. Adjournment**

72. The Thirty-seventh meeting of the IAG was adjourned at 10:30 pm Japan time with a vote of thanks to the Chairperson and participants of the meeting.

## **ANNEX A**

### **Draft Decisions**

**Only text of draft Decisions is appended to this Report.**

**The full text of the draft BWP 2024-2025 can be found in document ITTC(LIX)/8.**



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### Draft DECISION 2 (LIX)

#### ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET FOR THE 2024 AND 2025 FINANCIAL BIENNIUM

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling the Financial Rules and Rules Relating to Projects of the ITTO, Rule 3.3, which stipulates that Council shall approve and adopt the budget for the Administrative Account through a Council Decision;

Decides to:

1. Approve and adopt the Biennial Administrative Budget for the Financial Years 2024 and 2025 as contained in document CFA(XXXVIII)/2 Rev.1, in the amount of US\$7,104,228 and US\$7,104,278, respectively.

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### Draft DECISION 3 (LIX)

#### ITTO BIENNIAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE YEARS 2024-2025

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Appreciating the work of the Secretariat in liaising with Members, the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) and the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) in preparing its proposal to Council on the Biennial Work Programme for the years 2024-2025;

Noting further that activities listed in the Annex to this Decision are derived from the following: (a) ITTA, 2006; (b) the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026; (c) the four ITTO Committee Reports to the Fifty-ninth Session of Council; and (d) previous Council Decisions;

Decides to:

1. Adopt the Biennial Work Programme for the years 2024-2025 as contained in the Annex to this Decision;
2. Authorize the Executive Director to seek voluntary contributions from Member Countries and other funding sources to finance implementation of the activities listed in the Annex;
3. Request the Executive Director to implement and/or facilitate the implementation of activities in the approved Biennial Work Programme for the years 2024-2025, as contained in the Annex;
4. Request the Executive Director, as of the date of this Decision, to ensure that future activities to be funded outside the core budget are formulated as Concept Notes and included in the database, or as Council Decisions, in order to assess Member priorities and donor interest and financing, prior to being incorporated into the Biennial Work Programme (BWP).
5. Request the Secretariat to continue to indicate in the BWP how each activity aligns with the Programmatic Line(s); and
6. Request the Executive Director to report to Council on the progress in implementing the Biennial Work Programme for 2024-2025 during the Sixtieth and Sixty-first Sessions of the Council.

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**ANNEX**

BIENNIAL WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2024-2025 TO BE INSERTED BELOW  
IF COUNCIL AGREES TO DECISION



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### Draft DECISION 4 (LIX)

#### MANAGEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Appreciating the continuing efforts made by the Executive Director and her staff in exercising cost savings in the expenditures from the Administrative Budget for the year 2023;

Noting with concern the insufficient receipts of contributions to-date from Members to the Administrative Budget for 2023;

Acknowledging that the Working Capital Reserve is made available to meet the shortfall of funds to implement the work programme of the Organization, and that it ensures continuity of basic operations in the event of a temporary shortfall of cash;

Taking into account the serious difficulties faced by some producer members in paying their assessed contributions to the Administrative Budget and/or arrears, and noting the urgency to explore ways to find a sustainable solution to this ongoing challenge;

Recalling Decision 3(LVIII) which authorizes the Executive Director to transfer, if necessary, such as in emergency situations, an amount not exceeding 15% of the approved budget from the Working Capital Reserve annually to the current account in the Administrative Account to meet the shortfall of funds to implement the work programme of the Organization, as well as arrear payments received within the financial biennium;

Further noting the recommendations made by the virtual intersessional working group established under Decision 3(LVII) and extended for one year by Decision 3(LVIII) contained in its report (Document ITTC(LIX)/4) discussed during the 59<sup>th</sup> Council Session;

Decides to:

1. Adopt a trial measure that allows members that are ineligible to submit project proposals or concept notes, in accordance with ITTA, 2006, Art. 19.8, to be allowed to submit one proposal for every two years of arrears paid provided that a payment plan for the total arrears owed is submitted at the same time. This trial measure will commence on 1 January 2024 for a 4-year period until 1 January 2028;
2. Request the Secretariat to report to the CFA as needed on the progress of the implementation of this trial measure;
3. Abolish the provisions contained in Decision 7 (XXXIII), Annex 1, Part C – Measures Regarding the Arrears to the Administrative Account;

4. Write-off interest incurred on late payments for assessed contributions imposed under the ITTA, 1983;
5. Request members to pay as early as possible, and in full, their contributions to the Administrative Budgets, including for 2023 and 2024, as well as all arrears in contributions from previous years, to prevent further depletion of the Organization's savings through the utilization of the Working Capital Reserve to meet the shortfalls in contributions;
6. Urge the Secretariat to continue to undertake appropriate cost saving and efficiency measures in accordance with ITTO rules, regulations, policies and decisions in relation to current and future Administrative Budgets.

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### Draft DECISION 6 (LIX) YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling Decision 9(XXVIII) on Enhancing Participation of Members of Civil Society in the Relevant Activities of the ITTO, which established the Trade Advisory Group (TAG);

Further recalling Decision 2(XXXII), which established the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG);

Appreciating the continuing contribution of Trade and Civil Society Organizations in the formulation of ITTO Guidelines, Expert Panels, Discussions and other initiatives;

Recognizing the valuable contributions to the ITTO made by the TAG and CSAG, and the contributions that youth groups could make to the ITTO through their own advisory group;

Decides to:

1. Establish a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) and invite youth group representatives, such as the ITTO Fellowship awardees, the International Forestry Students' Association and others, to establish an open-ended Advisory Group to contribute to the work of the Council;
2. Authorize the Executive Director to publish the launching of the YAG, through the ITTO's website, the Tropical Forest Update, and other communications channels, as a means of attracting broader youth group participation in both the YAG and the ITTO's work;
3. Authorize the Executive Director to explore with the YAG opportunities for input and participation during Council Sessions in a manner similar to those of the TAG and CSAG;
4. Encourage the YAG, TAG and CSAG to collaborate on activities, programmes and projects in support of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026;
5. Invite the YAG to organize a panel discussion, relevant to the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026, to be held during the Sixtieth Session of the Council; and
6. Authorize the Executive Director to seek voluntary contributions from Member countries to meet the financial requirements of this Decision, and if none are forthcoming, utilize an amount not exceeding US\$50,000.00 from the Working Capital Reserve, to facilitate the participation of Youth Groups in the YAG panel discussion at the Sixtieth Session of the Council.