



ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

14 September 2020

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE RESEARCH
Twenty-eighth meeting
Videoconference, 19 August 2020**

**Report of the 28th meeting of the Conference to the Parties to the
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research**

1. This document has been prepared by the IAI Directorate.
2. The Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research held its twenty-eighth meeting (CoP-28) via videoconferencing on 19 August 2020.
3. The account of the proceedings and discussions of the meeting are provided in section I of the report.
4. The meeting adopted 8 Decisions and these are provided in section II of this report.

Section I

Proceedings of the Meeting

Introduction

5. In accordance with *the Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*, Article V, *The Conference of the Parties*, paragraph 3, the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research was held via videoconferencing on 19 August 2020.
6. All Parties and the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and Chair of the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) were invited to attend. The following Parties to the Agreement attended the meeting: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, United States of America and Uruguay. The Chair of the SAC attended the meeting.
7. The list of participants is available on the IAI website at:
<http://www.iai.int/en/post/detail/CoP-28>.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Meeting

8. On Wednesday, 19 August 2020, the Chair of Executive Council opened the meeting and welcomed delegates. He noted that CoP-28 was the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties held via video conferencing and that the *Rules of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research* (IAI/COP/28/Info/6) should be interpreted with flexibility.
9. In his comments, he noted that, given current events, specifically the advent of Covid-19 and climatic change, the role of the IAI as a science-based inter-governmental organization has never been more important. He also emphasized the need for increased cooperation among the Parties and support for scientific programs and activities.
10. He continued by noting the need to elect new members and Chair to the Executive Council per paragraph 2 of Article VI of the Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research,
11. He concluded by acknowledging the work of Ms Milagro Mainieri as the former 1st Vice-Chair and Dr. Jean Ometto as the former 2nd Chair of the Executive Council, inviting the IAI Executive Director to make a statement and requesting that meeting participants introduce themselves.
12. The IAI Executive Director thanked Parties for their participation and noted that CoP-28 was one of the best attended meetings of the Conference of the Parties. He expressed thanks to Jamaica for its re-engagement with the Institute. He also expressed gratitude for the in-kind contributions by Argentina which made simultaneous interpretation possible and by the United States for use of its video conferencing platform, Zoom.
13. He continued by noting the efforts made by Paraguay to organize the meeting in Asunción which was cancelled owing to Covid-19.
14. The opening of the meeting was concluded with a round of introductions by participants and with a request by the Executive Director for the Chair of the Executive Council to introduce the agenda.

Agenda item 2: Approval of the agenda

15. Following the opening of the meeting, the Chair invited Parties to adopt the provisional agenda to CoP-28 (IAI/COP/28/2).
16. Canada requested the opportunity to nominate Mitacs of Canada as an Associate of the Institute, per Article XI of the *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*.
17. The United States requested the opportunity to discuss the need to provide the Executive Director and Parties with an evaluation of work performance at the end of each inter-sessional period.
18. Parties agreed to include the above topics for discussion following agenda item 11, Decision XXVII/5: Recommendations by the SAC and the SPAC on revisions to the IAI scientific agenda.
19. The Executive Director suggested to Parties that, given the timeframe available for discussions, it would be preferable to first address agenda items which require adoption of a decision. Parties agreed by consensus to the suggestion.
20. The Executive Director also highlighted the need for Parties to submit their votes on nominations to the SAC via email. Parties requested the IAI Directorate to act as the teller to the SAC election and to report on the results at the end of the meeting.
21. Finally, the Executive Director reported that quorum had been achieved for the meeting and that 14 Parties submitted their accreditations.
22. Parties adopted the revised agenda by consensus.

Agenda item 3: Approval of the Report of the 27th meeting of the Conference of the Parties

23. Under this item of the agenda, Parties were invited to approve the *Report of the 27th meeting of the Conference of the Parties* (CoP-27, Brasilia) (IAI/COP/28/3).
24. Parties approved the *Report* of CoP-27.

Agenda item 4: Standing Committee for rules and procedures

25. Parties noted the need to interpret the Rules and procedures with flexibility during CoP-28 and requested the Executive Director to assist the Standing Committee for rules and procedure in updating the current rules to better accommodate the organization of future meetings held via video conferencing systems.
26. Argentina and the United States agreed to join the Standing Committee for rules and procedures.

Agenda item 5: Financial and budgetary matters

Agenda item 5(b): Annex 2: Core Budget and Country Contributions for FY 2020-2021 and Preliminary request 2021-2023, 5(c): Annex 3: Auditors report

27. The IAI Directorate was invited by the Chair to provide a summary of the proposal for the core budget and country contributions for fiscal year 2020-2021 and the preliminary request for 2021-2023.
28. The Executive Director began by noting that this proposal had been reviewed by the Financial and Administrative Committee (FAC) who forwarded its recommendation of approval to the IAI Executive Council. The IAI Executive Council had forwarded its recommendation for approval to CoP-28 (see Report of the Executive Council, IAI/COP/28/6).
29. The IAI Executive Director stated that the non-submission of voluntary contributions by Parties is placing a serious strain on the ability of the IAI Directorate to meet its workplan. He reiterated that this situation cannot continue in the long-term and that the IAI Directorate will need to curtail services and will not be able to support many activities as obligated by past and current draft decisions under discussion. He informed Parties that he will continue to discuss this situation with focal points and make recommendations to redress this situation, as appropriate and with the support of Parties, at CoP-29.
30. He concluded by acknowledging the in-kind contributions provided by Argentina and by Uruguay in its hosting of the IAI Directorate. He invited the IAI Administration, Finance and Operations Officer to present the Core Budget and country contributions for FY 2020-2021 and the Preliminary request 2021-2023. He also noted Argentina's request that in-kind contributions be included in the financial report which will be submitted to CoP-29. Canada supported this request.
31. In her presentation, the IAI Administration, Finance and Operations Officer suggested that, in light of the challenging economic and social situation faced by many Parties, no changes be made to the Core Budget and country contributions for FY 2020-2021 and to the Preliminary request 2021-2023. She informed Parties that a re-distribution of funds became necessary due to the significant reduction in travel by staff and the savings associated with the organization of a virtual CoP-28. However, these savings have not offset the lack of voluntary contributions by Parties.
32. She concluded by highlighting the positive conclusion of the Auditors. In summary, she also the statement by the Financial and Administrative ad hoc Committee that it: *received and has reviewed the IAI's core budget request for the coming fiscal year and recommends that the Executive Council forward it to the Conference of the Parties for approval* (see document IAI/COP/28/5/d).
33. The Conference of the Parties adopted the draft decision contained in document *Financial and budgetary matters Annex 2: Core budget and country contributions for FY 2020-2021 and preliminary request 2021-2023*, no. IAI/COP/26/5/ANNEX/b.

34. The Conference of the Parties also adopted the draft decision contained in document *Auditors report*, no. IAI/COP/28/5c).

35. In final remarks on this agenda item, the Executive Director thanked Colombia and the United States for joining the Financial and Administrative Ad Hoc Committee.

Executive Council

Agenda item 6 and 7: Report of the Executive Council and Election of Executive Council Members

36. The Chair introduced the report and noted the many activities where the Executive Council provided advice and guidance. He invited Parties to take note of the report and of the recommendations contained therein.

37. The Chair announced that nominations for the Executive Council are open and mentioned the need to consider geographic diversity. The Executive Director referred to paragraph 2 of Article VI which states that: *The Executive Council shall be composed of up to nine members elected by the Conference of the Parties for two-year terms, taking into account the need for balanced geographic representation.*

38. In the ensuing discussion, the following Parties volunteered and were seconded to serve on the Executive Council: United States was seconded by Panama; Canada was seconded by Argentina; Uruguay was seconded by Canada; Paraguay was seconded by the United States; Panama was seconded by Uruguay; Jamaica was seconded by the United States; Guatemala was seconded by Costa Rica; Mexico was seconded by the United States; and, Chile was seconded by Uruguay.

39. The United States was elected as Chair, with Panama as 1st Vice-Chair and Uruguay as 2nd Vice-Chair.

40. In concluding this agenda item, the Chair requested that Parties consider approval of the Report of the Executive Council.

41. The Parties approved the Report.

The Scientific Advisory Committee and the Science Policy Advisory Committee

Agenda item 11: Recommendations by the SAC and the SPAC on revisions to the IAI scientific agenda

42. The IAI Directorate introduced agenda item 11, revisions to the *IAI scientific agenda* and thank members of the SAC and the SPAC for their work and contributions.

43. Argentina stated that the revisions improved the agenda but that it would request the opportunity to contribute to the final draft.

44. Canada also stated that it would appreciate the opportunity to submit comments.

45. Parties reached consensus to not approve the *IAI scientific agenda* and to request the IAI Directorate to inform Parties via a notification that they may submit comments, revisions or suggestions for consideration at CoP-29. Argentina, Canada and the United States stated that they would be willing to work with the IAI Directorate on the revisions received to the *IAI scientific agenda*.
46. There was consensus that non-approval of the *IAI scientific agenda* did not represent negative criticism of the work achieved but an opportunity for improvement. Parties thanked the SAC and the SPAC for their work.
47. Parties did not adopt the draft decision contained in the annex to document IAI/COP/28/11.

Outstanding items

Article XI: Associates of the Institute

48. The Chair offered Canada the floor to introduce this additional agenda item.
49. Canada requested the Parties' consideration to invite Mitacs of Canada as an Associate of the Institute, per paragraph 1, Article IX of the *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research*.
50. In its request to Parties, Canada highlighted the relevance of Mitacs to the IAI and stated that Mitacs is a Canadian national, not-for-profit organization that has designed and delivered research and training programs for 20 years.
51. Canada continued by informing Parties that Mitacs supports innovation and growth through advanced interdisciplinary research and training programs across Canada and beyond. It added that Mitacs's cooperative innovation model is cross sectoral and supports innovation progress, particularly in areas that are key to solving problems with both Canadian and global implications and that this includes work in areas that are also priorities to the IAI, including agriculture, sustainable energy, clean technology, social innovation, and so forth.
52. Parties supported by consensus Canada's request to invite Mitacs to become an Associate of the Institute.
53. Parties adopted the decision on Associates which are contained in the Annex to this document.

Article VI, paragraph 4(b) of the Agreement: Performance evaluation of the Executive Director

54. The Chair gave the floor to the United States on its request to introduce the need for an annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director of the IAI.
55. In taking the floor, the United States noted the need for such a procedure to provide the Executive Director with feedback on performance on an annual basis. Additionally, a

performance evaluation would also provide the Executive Director with an opportunity to highlight issues that may be impacting on the work of the Directorate.

56. The United States continued by informing Parties that the Agreement provides such an evaluative role to the Executive Council through paragraph 49b), Article VI which states: *Ensure that the Director implements the policies adopted by the Conference of the Parties*. The United States also referred to similar exercises currently underway in other international organizations where it has representation.
57. In its conclusion, the United States noted also the need for a whistleblower mechanism where staff would be able to communicate with the Executive Council and discuss issues of concern.
58. The Parties agreed to request the Executive Council to undertake a performance evaluation of the Executive Director.
59. The Parties also agreed to request the IAI Directorate to revise the *IAI employee handbook* to include a whistleblower mechanism for consideration by the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties
60. Parties adopted decisions on a performance evaluation of the Executive Director and on the revision of the *IAI employee handbook* to include a whistleblower mechanism which are contained in the Annex to this document.

IAI Policy on gender

61. The Chair offered the floor to Argentina to speak on this item.
62. Argentina noted that the IAI lacked a policy on gender to ensure equitable participation and leadership of women in IAI activities and projects. It stated that it should draft such a policy for presentation to Parties at the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
63. Mexico and Panama supported the proposal by Argentina noting the value of implementing such a policy.
64. Parties adopted the decision on the drafting of a policy on gender which is contained in the Annex to this document.

Elections

Agenda item 9: Election of SAC members

65. The Chair informed Parties on the results of elections for membership to the SAC.
66. Dr. Ines Camiloni of Argentina and Dr. Tereza Cavazos of Mexico were elected to the SAC by the Parties present at CoP-28.

Agenda item 10: SPAC members

67. The Parties agreed to approve the nominations submitted for membership to the SPAC.
68. The IAI Directorate informed Parties on the need to revise the terms of reference and that such a revision would be completed under the advice of the SPAC during the intersessional period. The draft revised version would be presented to the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties for its consideration.

Agenda item 11: Summary report of activities by the IAI Directorate

69. The Chair invited the IAI Directorate to summarize activities contained in its report to the Conference of the Parties.
70. The IAI Directorate spoke on implementation of decisions adopted at CoP-28 (Brasilia, 2019) and efforts to financial support for new projects. It highlighted projects in the Caribbean region funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and the new funding request to the United States National Science Foundation.
71. The IAI Science and Technology Policy Fellowships Program (STeP) was also described, particularly the implementation of the pilot program in Argentina and Mexico.
72. Activities related to open science, capacity building, and science-policy were also summarized and described.
73. A full summary of other activities and projects is available in document IAI/COP/28/12.
74. Parties took note of the report.

Agenda item 26: Determination of the time and venue of the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties

75. The Chair opened this agenda item by inviting Parties to express interest they may have in hosting the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-29).
76. Paraguay took the floor to explain that it was not in a position to offer the hosting of CoP-29 at the current time. It would inform the IAI Directorate should it have more information during the intersessional period should hosting be possible. In light of the above, Paraguay invited other Parties to consider hosting CoP-29.
77. The IAI Directorate informed Parties that it would be communicating with its focal points to ascertain interest in hosting CoP-29.

Closing remarks

78. The Chair thanked Parties for their participation, their flexibility in interpreting the rules of procedure and their contributions to discussions during the meeting. He continued by stating his hope to meet face-to-face at CoP-29.

79. The IAI Executive Director also thanked Parties for their participation and that the IAI Directorate will do its utmost to implement the Agreement and decisions adopted at CoP-27 (Brasilia) and CoP-28 (Videoconference).
80. The meeting was closed on 19 August at 3:45PM.

Section II

Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-eighth meeting

**Decisions of the 28th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research
Held via Video Conferencing
19 August 2020**

CORE BUDGET AND COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR FY 2020-2021 AND PRELIMINARY REQUEST 2021-2023

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXVIII/1. The CoP accepts and approves the Core Budget for fiscal year 2020-2021.

XXVIII/2. The CoP accepts and approves the Core Budget preliminary request for fiscal year 2021-2023.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXVIII/3. The Conference of the Parties approves the Independent auditors report.

POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXVIII/4. Instructs the Executive Council to exercise Article VI, The *Executive Council*, paragraph 4(b) of the *Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research* to undertake an annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director and report at each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXVIII/5. Instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the Executive Council, to revise the *IAI employee handbook* to include a whistleblower mechanism for consideration by the 29th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXVIII/6. Instructs the IAI Directorate, in collaboration with the Executive Council, to develop a policy on gender and IAI projects and activities.

INVITATION TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE OF THE INSTITUTE

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXVIII/7. The Conference of the Parties invites Mitacs in Canada to become an Associate of the Institute.

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXVIII/8. On behalf of the Conference of the Parties, the IAI Directorate is tasked with drafting an invitation to Mitacs to become an Associate of the Institute and to prepare an Agreement of Association.