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**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE RESEARCH**

**Thirty-first meeting
Panama City, Panama
21-22 June 2023**

**Report of the 31th meeting of the Conference to the Parties to the
Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI)**

1. This document has been prepared by the IAI Directorate.
2. The Conference of the Parties to the IAI held its 31st meeting (CoP-31) in Panama City, Panama from 21 to 22 June 2023.
3. Section I of the report provides an account of the proceedings and discussions of the meeting.
4. The CoP adopted 23 Decisions, which are provided in section II of this report.

Section I

Proceedings of the Meeting

Introduction

5. *Per the Agreement establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, Article V, The Conference of the Parties, paragraph 3, the 31st meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the IAI was held in Panama City, Panama, and via videoconference from 21 to*

IAI/COP/31/FNRPT

22 June 2023.

6. Parties, members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), IAI Associates, and observers attended the meeting. The following Parties to the Agreement attended the meeting: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and the United States.
7. The list of participants, including observers, is available on the IAI website at: <https://www.iai.int/administrador/assets/images/ckfinder/files/CoP-31%20List%20of%20Participants.pdf>.

Opening of the Meeting

8. On 21 June 2023, Dr. Eduardo Ortega Barría, the National Secretary for Science and Technology (SENACYT) of Panama, opened the meeting and welcomed delegates. He highlighted the importance of CoP-31 to Panama and stated the objectives of the meeting.
9. In addition to the opening statement made by the National Secretary of SENACYT, statements were made by H.E. Milciades Concepción, the Minister of Environment of Panama, Dr. Marcos Regis da Silva, former IAI Executive Director, Dr. Anna Stewart-Ibarra, the IAI Executive Director, and Dr. Maria Uhle, the Chair of the Executive Council.

Opening statements

10. The Minister of Environment of Panama welcomed the 31st meeting of the Conference of the Parties to Panama City, Panama, and spoke on the challenges posed by global environmental change and the unique position of Panama in addressing them. He highlighted the key role of science and the IAI in supporting the formulation of effective policies to address global change challenges. He described how Panama is highly sensitive to the effects of climate change and highlighted the country's commitment to implementing policies and developing instruments in support of decision-making.
11. The former Executive Director of the IAI thanked the Government of Panama. He highlighted the importance and potential of the IAI, highlighting its unique nature in providing scientific information to governments for decision-making and developing more effective public policies to meet the challenges of global change.
12. The Executive Director thanked the Government of Panama for hosting the meeting, the Parties for their support and participation, the outgoing executive director for his six years of service, and the IAI staff. She highlighted the potential of the IAI to identify solutions to the

global change challenges of the region. She continued by stressing the need for greater collaboration in developing scientific projects and training activities.

13. The Chair of the Executive Council highlighted the work of the IAI, regarded as one of the preeminent intergovernmental organizations in the world linking science and policy. She noted the need to continue strengthening the science-policy interface in the region.
14. The opening of the meeting was concluded with a round of introductions by participants.

Administrative and financial matters

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda

15. Following the opening of the meeting, the Chair of the meeting invited Parties to adopt the provisional agenda to CoP-31 (IAI/COP/31/1) with a revision to move item 13.d before item 9. and item 13.b before 13.a.
16. Parties adopted the agenda revised by consensus.

Agenda item 2: Election of CoP Bureau

17. Parties elected the composition of the CoP Bureau. The following Parties were elected: Panama (Chair), Guatemala (1st Vice-Chair), and Colombia (2nd Vice-Chair).

Agenda item 3: Approval of the *Report of the 30th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the Report of the 2023 Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties*

18. Under this item of the agenda, Parties were invited to approve the Report of the 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-30, 2022, Videoconference) (IAI/COP/31/3) and the Report of the 2023 Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties (IAI/COP/31/3(a)).
19. Parties adopted the draft decisions XXXI/1 and XXXI/2 to approve the Report of CoP-30 and the Report of the 2023 Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Agenda item 4: Standing Committee for Rules and Procedures

20. The representative from the United States noted that the Standing Committee for Rules and Procedures lacks membership and encouraged Parties to contact the IAI Directorate to join the committee.

Agenda item 5: Report of the Credentials Committee

21. The Credentials Committee, composed of Panama and Paraguay, informed Parties that CoP-31 achieved quorum with 13 Parties attending and having presented their diplomatic credentials: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and the United States.

Agenda item 6: Financial and budgetary matters

Agenda item 6(a): Annex 1: Overview of the Financial Status for FY 2022-2023; 6(b): Annex 2: Core Budget and Country Contributions for FY 2023-2024; and, Preliminary request 2024-2026, 6(c): Annex 3: Auditors report

22. The Chair of the meeting invited the IAI Directorate to provide an overview of the financial status for the fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023, a summary of the proposal for the core budget and country contributions for the fiscal year 2023-2024, and the preliminary request for 2024-2026.
23. The IAI Administration, Finance, and Operations Officer began her presentation by summarizing the Financial Status report.
24. In her presentation, she noted that no changes to the Core Budget and country contributions for FY 2023-2024 were made. She informed Parties that the Directorate continues to make efforts to reduce costs. Parties, particularly those whose contributions have not increased since 1992, were invited to consider voluntary increases in their contributions to the operational budget.
25. She continued by commenting that documentation on this agenda item had been reviewed by the Financial and Administrative Committee (FAC), which forwarded its recommendation to the IAI Executive Council for the Parties to approve the proposal for the core budget and country contributions for FY 2023-2024 and the preliminary request for FY 2024-2026.
26. She closed by highlighting the positive conclusions of the Auditors. In summary, she highlighted the statement by the Financial and Administrative ad hoc Committee on the work of the IAI: *Staff are commended for again receiving an unqualified audit opinion* (see document no. IAI/COP/31/6d). She also presented the EC-55 Recommendation L1/4 inviting the Conference of the Parties to approve the Core Budget and Country Contributions for FY 2023-2024 and the preliminary FY 2024-2026 request.
27. The Conference of the Parties adopted the draft decision in the document no. IAI/COP/31/6b:

Core budget and country contributions for FY 2023-2024 and preliminary request 2024-2026.

28. The IAI's Executive Director emphasized that voluntary contributions from Parties have not increased in over 30 years, compromising the organization's financial health. She also noted the growing demands on the Directorate to meet the needs of Parties and the many new programs being implemented to serve the Parties.
29. The Chair of the Executive Council shared the recommendation from EC-55 that a financial working group be established to review the current financial status and develop a plan to: 1) increase Parties' annual voluntary contributions to the IAI core budget over the next 1-3 years; 2) define other types of contribution to the IAI core/program budgets (i.e. secondments, etc); 3) define other financial and in-kind contributions to the IAI program budgets (science and capacity building programs and projects).
30. The following participants volunteered to serve on the working group Carlos Higa Matsumoto (Brazil), Milagro Mainieri (Panamá), Maria Uhle (United States), Anahí Urquiza (SAC member), María Amparo Martínez Arroyo (SPAC member) and Alexandra Mallet (SAC member).
31. The Chair of the meeting invited the IAI's Administration, Finance and Operations Officer to present the Core Budget and country contributions for FY 2023-2024 and the Preliminary request 2024-2026.
32. The Conference of the Parties also adopted the draft decision in the annex to document *Auditors report*, no. IAI/COP/30/6c.
33. In final remarks on this agenda item, the Executive Director thanked the Parties for their support. She encouraged them to find ways to increase their financial support for the IAI Directorate.

Agenda item 7. Report of the Executive Council

34. The Executive Council Chair introduced the report and highlighted the many activities where the Executive Council provided advice and guidance, noting that EC-55 Recommendations L1/2, L1/3, L1/4, located in the annex to the Report, have been taken into consideration by the Conference of the Parties under agenda items 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Agenda item 7.a: Recruitment of the post of the Executive Director

35. The Executive Council Chair described the processes for selecting the new Executive

Director, Dr. Anna Stewart-Ibarra, elected by Decision 2023/Extra-CoP/1, adopted at the Extraordinary Conference of the Parties, 2023, videoconference.

36. Reference was made to the report of the 2023 Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (IAI/COP/31/3(a)) and the document IAI/EC/55/6/b, describing the selection process in detail.
37. She continued by describing the recruitment process of the Science Director for which Dr. Edwin Castellanos was elected.
38. She then invited the Executive Director to present her vision of the IAI.

Agenda item 7.b. Presentation on vision by the incoming Executive Director

39. The Executive Director began her presentation by providing background on her experience in collaborative transdisciplinary research science in the region. She continued by presenting her vision for the IAI, enhancing the importance of bringing scientific knowledge to decision-making and the importance of the Strategic Plan in guiding the work of the IAI. She presented a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the IAI and strategic actions supporting Parties' needs and priorities.
40. Brazil suggested that the IAI Directorate engage and regularly inform the Foreign Affairs ministries on IAI activities.
41. Guatemala spoke on the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in science and noted their efforts to support indigenous women scientists and train journalists in science communication.
42. Bolivia also commented on the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion, especially for indigenous women, who are vulnerable to global environmental change.
43. The Director of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Office for the Americas, Mr. Julián Báez, an observer to CoP 31, commented on the value of linking scientific production to policy and decision-making. Also, he highlighted the need for involvement in multilateral organizations.
44. Argentina asked to explore ways to unify initiatives from the different types of global governance institutions and that those work together to avoid overlapping individual efforts.
45. The Director of Knowledge of Alexander Von Humboldt Institute, an IAI Associate, Ms. Gisele

Didier, commented on the alignment of the vision presented by the Executive Director on science-policy and science-society links with the Humboldt Institute's vision and offered to strengthen collaborations on this topic.

Agenda item 7c. Decision XXIX/9: Update on *Initiative for conducting a national climate assessment in support on adaptation and mitigation: Training and capacity building in Latin America and the Caribbean*

46. A representative of United States and the United States National Science Foundation (NSF) presented the *Initiative for conducting a national climate assessment in support of adaptation and mitigation: Training and capacity building in Latin America and the Caribbean (LACI)*. He described the overarching vision and activities of LACI and highlighted that the initiative is grounded in co-design. Four pilot projects are being developed in El Salvador, the Southern Cone of South America, Amazonia and Jamaica.
47. The former Executive Director offered a description of the LACI pilot project on data in the Southern Cone.

Agenda item 8: Election of Executive Council members

48. Under this item of the agenda the CoP-31 elected the Executive Council composition for the period 2023-2025. The following Parties were elected to serve in the Executive Council: Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the United States.

Global Change Science Policy Advances and Priorities: Updates from Parties

49. Four experts from Panama presented projects and advances at the science-policy interface: 1) Digital platform for farming as a strategy to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the sector, 2) Facilitating a science-policy interface: Multivariate analysis of the water-energy-food nexus, 3) Towards a sustainable energy future: research for a just and equitable energy transition in Panama, and 4) Progress in climate policy and action in Panama.
50. Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay shared presentations on major advances and challenges related to global change in their countries.

Agenda item 13.d): Report on the implementation of the IAI strategic plan: The regional assessment¹

¹ As per the revisions made to the agenda, Item 13. d) was presented after item 8.

51. The Chair requested the IAI Directorate to introduce this section of the report.
52. The IAI Directorate began by referring to Decision XXIX/16, which instructed the Directorate, in collaboration with the Parties, the SAC, and the SPAC, to map the domestic and international global change policy and decision-making landscape through a regional assessment, subject to the availability of external resources.
53. The methods and results of the Regional Assessment were presented in detail, particularly the priorities of Parties relating to global change policy decisions. Barriers and opportunities to using scientific information in decision-making were also presented.
54. The assessment revealed that climate action is the most important current global change policy priority for Parties, followed by ecosystem services and biodiversity. Water security was also a current priority. The main emerging policy priority sectors were human health and well-being, poverty, and inequality.
55. The United States thanked the Directorate for the effort and praised it.
56. The Executive Director thanked the Parties, the SAC, and SPAC for their contributions to the regional assessment and noted that this work will continue.

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Science Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC)

Agenda item 9: Election of SAC and SPAC member

57. The Chair invited the SAC and SPAC Chairs to present on this agenda item.
58. The SAC Chair informed that the committee to evaluate SAC and SPAC candidates recommended that Parties consider the following candidates as new members: Dr. Pedro Laterra (Argentina) for the vacancy on the SAC and Dr. Laura Ramajo (Chile) for the vacancy of alternate member in the SAC; and Dr. Carlos Joly (Brazil), Dr. Gilma Mantilla (Colombia) and Mr. Inty Arcos (Ecuador) for the three vacancies on the SPAC.
59. Parties were invited to vote via email before the close of the meeting².
60. The Chair thanked the candidates for their willingness to serve on the SAC and the Parties for their consideration of new members.

² See the results on page 17: Election of SAC and SPAC members

Agenda item 10: Joint Report of the SAC/SPAC

61. The Chair invited the SAC and SPAC Chairs to present the joint report of the SAC/SPAC.
62. The SAC and SPAC Chairs thanked members of the committees for their support of and contributions to the IAI. They noted that the SAC and SPAC members also participate in numerous ad-hoc committees to address specific topics. They also thanked outgoing members of the committees for their service: Tereza Cavazos (SAC), Javier Gracia-Garza (SPAC), Evelia Rivera Arriaga (SPAC), and Karen Silverwood Cope (SPAC)
63. The Chairs continued by summarizing the activities of the SPAC and SAC during the inter-sessional period.
64. They listed the programs and projects that benefited from the advice and participation of the SAC and SPAC, including the selection of the new IAI Executive Director and IAI Science Director; the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee; the Science Diplomacy Center advisory board; Transdisciplinary Curriculum Steering Committee; a project on the integrated management of sargassum; and the Steering Committee on Climate, Environment, and Health.
65. They presented the Draft Decisions XXXI/5 and XXXI/6 provided in the annex of this report. They recommended that the IAI establishes research and training programs on oceans, islands and coastal systems and the nexus of climate, environment, and health. These programs would support decision-making by Parties in partnership with regional and global organizations.
66. Panama commented on the importance of One Health and the nexus of climate, environment and health.
67. Two observers, the Policy Director of the Planetary Health Alliance, Ms. Elizabeth Willetts, and the Director of Knowledge of Humboldt Institute, an IAI associate, Ms. Gisele Didier, praised the initiative. They commented on the alignment of the IAI agenda with their institutions and the importance of finding interconnections across environment and health. They expressed interest in working with the IAI to support this initiative.
68. The United States encouraged the Planetary Health Alliance to become involved with the Belmont Forum CRA on climate, environment, and health, and the IAI.
69. Chile asked for more engagement from countries and regional collaboration in this nexus approach.

70. Comments were made by SAC and SPAC members.
71. Argentina invited members to the Science Diplomacy seminar organized by Mercosur, which will take place in Buenos Aires in August 2023.
72. The SPAC Chair presented the strategies identified by the committees to meet Parties' needs and address global changes issues and communication strategies.
73. Bolivia welcomed the support of the IAI on the research topic of glaciers.
74. The IAI Executive Director commented that the IAI is currently working on hydrology in the Andes and the Amazonia and tropical forests, which are interconnected and related to glaciers and the entire Andean ecosystem.
75. The SPAC Chair presented the provisional Decision XXXI/7 for the IAI to engage more actively in international multilateral science policy forums.
76. The SAC Chair presented the provisional Decision XXXI/8 for the IAI CoP to meet in person every two years and virtually in the intervening years to reduce the carbon footprint and costs.
77. The SAC Chair introduced the presentation by ANDEX, the Hydroclimate Research Project in the Andes of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP)³.
78. Chile mentioned its participation in ANDEX.
79. A member of the SPAC shared the importance of glaciers in regions beyond the Andes, such as in Mexico.
80. The Director of Knowledge of Alexander Von Humboldt Institute highlighted that IAI could engage with ANDEX and other regionally related initiatives, where different IAI Parties participate to support sustainable development in the Andes.
81. The Chair of the SPAC highlighted the cryosphere data in the IPCC report and that, unfortunately, it is only available in English, suggesting that the IAI can seek resources to make this information more broadly available to IAI Parties.

³ The video is available here: <https://youtu.be/d50g9TXaXtl>.

82. Canada mentioned that the country has researchers working on glaciers who could be involved in this effort.
83. A representative of an observer organization, the Director of the Project GEWEX of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP), Dr. Peter J. van Oevelen, mentioned the existence of continental-scale projects similar to ANDEX in other regions.
84. An outgoing member of SPAC mentioned that Canada is part of one of the GEWEX global projects and that this is an opportunity for the IAI.
85. The GEWEX representative mentioned UNESCO is launching the year of the Glacier, which is an opportunity for the region, and he highlighted that these research networks take time to develop.
86. The Chair of the SAC presented the provisional Decision XXXI/9 regarding ANDEX.
87. The Executive Director of the IAI noted that the IAI recently signed an MoU with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and that the collaboration with ANDEX is related, as the World Climate Research Program (WCRP) falls under the WMO.
88. The GEWEX representative highlighted the potential to support similar networks in Central America and the Caribbean.
89. A SAC member indicated that there is significant climate research capacity in the Caribbean; however, additional resources are needed to support researchers.
90. An observer from the IAI's Small Grants Program mentioned that two levels of support for decision-making are needed since local decision-making requires support to negotiate with national governments that may not see the impact at the local level.
91. The Chair of the SAC mentioned the importance of the dry corridor in Central America.
92. An observer from the Belmont Forum and STeP fellow, Ms. Fany Ramos, commented on the provisional decision on multilateral meetings, highlighting that the IPCC generally focuses on publications in English and that the IAI could influence IPCC and other scientific committees to include scientific information not published in English.
93. Chile emphasized that IPCC has essential information, but little information is available in Spanish, which limits its use.

94. Brazil stated that Brazil is working on translating some reports to Portuguese, including for African countries.
95. The Director of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Office for the Americas, Mr. Julián Báez, an observer, mentioned it is important to translate technical documents into Spanish because, although some UN documents are translated, not all are. Countries can contribute with the translation of documents, or governments can also demand translations, which can be made available if there are the resources.
96. Bolivia mentioned that global platforms have relevant information on global change, but the pixel size is 3 or 5 km. Therefore, local governments cannot use the information, for which it would be important for the IAI to produce down-scaled information or support capacity strengthening to do this.
97. Panama commented on the Copernicus hub working with 20 satellites from the European Union. She said Panama is currently working on a capacity-building plan, by first identifying research needs and projects already working with Copernicus data.
98. Brazil mentioned that the country works with Copernicus and could help to triangulate support.
99. The Chair of the meeting mentioned that Chile also works with Copernicus data and could join these efforts.
100. The Chair of the meeting thanked the Chairs of the SAC and SPAC, whose terms expire at the beginning of the 2023-2024 intersessional period and informed the meeting that elections for new Chairs would be held during the first meeting of the SAC and SPAC following CoP-31.
101. The Executive Director thanked the SAC and SPAC for their work and advice. She also informed the meeting that a few Parties were attending the meetings of the SAC and SPAC and that other Parties, or their designated representatives, were also welcome to attend.
102. CoP-31 adopted the draft Decisions presented by the SAC and SPAC, which are provided in the annex of this report.
103. The Chair closed this agenda item, and the meeting took note of the report.

Agenda item 11: Discussions with Panama on the establishment of a regional office

104. The Chair, in his introduction, stated that informal discussions on the possibility of

establishing a regional office in Panama were held with SENACYT during IAI Directorate missions to Panama in 2023.

105. He further spoke on Panama's active role in the IAI, including its role as Vice Chair of the Executive Council and Chair of the SAC. He expressed an interest of Panama in hosting a regional office. He continued by noting the vulnerability of Panama and the region to the impacts of climate change and the opportunity of collaboration with Central America and Caribbean countries that the regional office in Panama could represent, helping to attract and expand the membership of countries in the region. He also noted that Panama hosts many regional organizations related to global change.
106. Panama noted that establishing a regional office would increase the visibility of the IAI's work on science, science diplomacy, and capacity-building and promote the participation of States not Party to the Agreement.
107. Uruguay supported Panama's proposal to host the regional office. He highlighted the interest of Uruguay in continuing to host the IAI Directorate office and noted active collaborations in Uruguay.
108. Guatemala, Paraguay, and the United States also supported the initiative. Paraguay added that it would be good to have other subregional offices. The former IAI Executive Director mentioned the possibility of having an office at OAS located in Washington, DC, to help improved communication with other agencies based in DC and the United States.
109. Brazil stressed the financial burden of establishing a regional office and the need for a clear analysis of the costs and benefits.
110. The Chair concluded this item of the agenda by noting that a formal proposal will be submitted by Panama for consideration by the Parties, potentially at an extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Agenda item 12: Article XI: Associates of the Institute: University of the West Indies (UWI)

111. The Chair offered the floor to Jamaica to introduce this agenda item.
112. Jamaica invited a representative from the University of West Indies (UWI) to present on this agenda item.
113. The representative of UWI, Prof. David Smith, also a SPAC member, provided the history of collaboration between the IAI and UWI and the rationale for the Parties to consider inviting

UWI to become an Associate of the IAI per Article XI of the *Agreement establishing the IAI*.

114. The United States and Paraguay supported the proposal.

115. CoP-31 adopted draft Decision XXXI/10 and XXXI/12 provided in the annex of this report.

Agenda item 12: Article XI: Associates of the Institute: Global Change Research Center of the National University of Asunción

116. The Chair offered the floor to Paraguay to introduce this agenda item.

117. Paraguay briefly provided background on the Global Change Research Center of the National University of Asunción to become an IAI Associate per Article XI of the *Agreement establishing the IAI*.

118. Panama and the United States supported the proposal.

119. CoP-31 adopted draft Decisions XXXI/11 and XXXI/13 provided in the annex of this report.

120. The Chair closed this agenda item and the meeting took note of the report.

Report of the IAI Directorate

Agenda item 13: IAI Directorate Summary report

Agenda item 13.b) Capacity building⁴

121. The Chair invited the Director of Capacity Building to report on this section of Agenda item 13.

122. The Director of Capacity Building began her report by noting that activities have the support of a team, the STeP program lead, and the STeP fellows at the IAI Directorate.

123. She described the expansion of the STeP fellowship program in the number of fellows, participating countries, and the increasing interest of Parties and other partners in STeP, whose objective is training future scientific advisors to communicate science and support

⁴ As per the revisions made to the agenda, item 13 b): Capacity Building was presented before item 13.a): Science.

decision-making better. She highlighted that the program's success resides in its flexibility to work at the interface between science and policy and its uniqueness in adapting to the Parties' needs.

124. The STeP program lead described the leadership workshop of the STeP program in 2022 held in Uruguay and the outcomes of the STeP science diplomacy projects and the special issue with the Journal of Science Policy & Governance (JSPG) on international collaboration and the exchange of scientific information and knowledge relevant to “Development Policy and Global Change Science to Achieve the Vision of Sustainable Americas.” She presented the STeP professional development training program for the period 2023-2024.
125. The STeP program lead went on to share IAI’s collaboration with Educational Partnership for Innovation in Communities (EPIC) and the training and funding of seed projects to support partnerships between local governments and universities to tackle policy issues and societal problems in LAC.
126. The Director of Capacity Building described a study commissioned by the Wellcome Trust to conduct a “Latin America and the Caribbean regional landscape and opportunities analysis on infectious diseases, mental health, and climate and health. This project has provided information for the IAI to understand better the institutional, research, and funding opportunities on climate and health in LAC.
127. Next, she described the work of the IAI in coordinating the project “Drought Information System for Southern South America” (SISSA) for the La Plata Basin countries. A representative of the SISSA team provided the advances and development of the project through a recorded video.
128. The Director of Capacity Building provided an update on the third year of the implementation of the International Mobility Research Fellowship Program for Latin American and Caribbean early-career scientists on Past Global Changes (PAGES), which is an opportunity for South-South collaboration and research training and exchange coordinated by the IAI with financial resources from PAGES.
129. She followed by describing the ongoing funding raising efforts for Capacity Building.
130. She continued by describing the advances of the development of the Science Diplomacy Center and an overview of the two decisions related to the Science Diplomacy Center from CoP-30. She mentioned the work underway to develop training materials on science diplomacy related to global change, including an asynchronous curriculum, regional case studies from the Americas, and a simulation game. The material will be available in Spanish,

English, and Portuguese.

131. The representative of the United States provided the background and described the objectives of the Science Diplomacy Center and the initial outcomes of the Science Diplomacy Side Event that was held on the first day of CoP 31. She focused on two of the main pillars of the SDC, including 'Emerging Issues' and the 'Science Diplomacy Knowledge Hub'. She shared that the Center was recommended to facilitate dialogue around emerging technologies such as AI, Quantum, and Block-Chain to solve global environmental change-related issues. She also highlighted some emerging themes that were priority areas for the region such as climate disaster risks & cascading effects, pandemic preparedness and global health security, valuing Small Island Developing States (SIDS), EDI frameworks, and indigenous knowledge systems.
132. The representative of Panama shared the participants' contribution at the SDC Side Event on the topic of how science diplomacy could support regional collaboration (multilateralism) among member states on global environmental change issues and the role of the Center in supporting national strategies, plans, and programs. She shared that the Center can strengthen collaborative learning, coordinate regional actions, build connections to help understand key interfaces between different fields of knowledge, and support countries to build a common position to negotiate climate global priorities and identify shared economic opportunities.
133. The representative of Brazil presented the capacity-building goals of the Science Diplomacy Center and the importance of training government officials on the concepts and tools of science diplomacy. He also highlighted the importance of Parties supporting the Center as the work of the Center will benefit the Parties.
134. The Director of Capacity Building and members of the Science Diplomacy Center provided a summary output from the side event of this Center in the context of the Center's 3-year plan.
135. She then presented draft Decisions XXXI/18 - XXXI/21 related to establishing the Science Diplomacy Center, provided in the annex.
136. The Parties adopted Decisions XXXI/18 - XXXI/21.
137. The STeP program lead then presented a video on the work of the STeP fellows and their leadership statement, which is a result of the STeP professional development training.
138. The Chair closed the discussion, and Parties took note of this section of the report.

Agenda item 13. a): Science

139. The Chair invited the IAI Executive Director to report on this section of Agenda item 13.
140. In her introduction, the IAI Executive Director thanked the IAI staff and IAI STeP Fellows for contributing to the Science Program report.
141. The Executive Director summarized the activities performed by the IAI Science Program during the inter-sessional period. She described the process of building capacity around Climate, Environment, and Health (CEH), including the in-person workshop in Neuquén, Argentina (held 13-17 March 2023) and the seed grant research funding call. She described the IAI's involvement in the CEH collaborative research action of the Belmont Forum.
142. A joint effort of Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education (GCCHE), Health Canada, PAHO, and the IAI, trained more than 4,000 people in climate, environment, and health in three courses. Some IAI focal points and Ministry of Health staff participated in the courses, which helped institutions comply with training requirements.
143. The Executive Director mentioned that transdisciplinary teams were trained and formed regional networks and pre-proposals for research through a virtual course. This was followed by an in-person workshop hosted in Neuquén, Argentina, by the Ministry of Health of Neuquén and IAI with GCCHE and PAHO. Participants included experts from SAC and SPAC, regional organizations such as CIIFEN, WMO, Centro Regional del Clima, and the Ministry of Health of Argentina, with other scientists and decision-makers. Twelve teams, 15 countries and 134 researchers will receive USD254,000 in research funding.
144. The Executive Director shared the comments of the Minister of Health of the Province of Neuquén, Argentina on Declaration 3524 of the Legislature of the Province of Neuquén, Argentina, as a result of the in-person CEH workshop⁵.
145. She continued by highlighting the work the IAI has conducted to launch the Transdisciplinary Academy and a Virtual Campus, where training materials will be available in Spanish, English and Portuguese, with open access.
146. The Executive Director summarized the progress on concluding the Small Grants Program: The role of ecosystem services in adaptation to global change for human wellbeing (SGP-HW), including the synthesis workshop held in Panama City.

⁵ See Notification IAIUYDIR/2023/21:

https://www.iai.int/admin/site/sites/default/files/notificaciones/nt-2023-21-en_0.pdf.

147. She mentioned the advances in the Integrated Management of Sargassum project in partnership with CAF.
148. She shared the key messages from the SGP-HW science-policy briefing, a side event held prior to CoP-31.
149. She highlighted how the IAI is working to elevate the science of the Americas in international forums, for example, by co-hosting the Sustainability Research and Innovation Conference (SRI2023), for which the IAI also gave scholarships to early career professionals, to help improve professional networks.
150. She mentioned that the IAI is a partner of the Science Summit of the UN General Assembly. Last year the event included more than 70 sessions from Latin America that were free and open to the public. Presenters can speak in any language, and the IAI will provide interpretation.
151. The IAI has provided scholarships to events and activities, including PAGES, the SETAC meeting, and the World Climate Research Programs Conference.

Agenda item 13 a) i): Decision XXX/6: Report of the Gender and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

152. The Chair requested that the representative of Panama present this agenda item.
153. The representative noted that in 2021, the Conference of the Parties, at its 29th meeting, adopted the gender policy for projects and activities of the IAI and revised the policy in collaboration with SAC and SPAC. In 2022, the Conference of the Parties, at its 30th meeting, adopted the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy to develop and implement activities under the new policy. A committee composed of focal points (from Argentina, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, and the United States), the Belmont Forum, and members of SAC and SPAC drafted the objectives and implementation plan.
154. She went on to note that the implementation plan requires cross-cutting actions to fulfill operational goals: 1) Support processes and policies to increase equity, diversity & inclusion within and across the SAC, SPAC, grantees, trainees, and Directorate employees, 2) Develop & Implement EDI procedures for Research Funding Opportunities Issued by the IAI, 3) Increase the ability of IAI activities to promote healthy work and research environments and 4) Develop, improve, implement, and monitor fair, accessible, and inclusive hiring practices.
155. She shared that the Committee recommended that the implementation plan be a live

document, which will be reviewed and updated continuously. The document is available in English and Spanish⁶.

156. She then presented two draft decisions from the Committee related to the establishment of a standing EDI committee, Decisions XXXI/14 and XXXI/15, provided in the annex of this report
157. The Parties adopted draft Decisions XXXI/14 and XXXI/15 and were invited to serve on the committee.
158. Guatemala, the United States, Panama, Canada, Argentina, and Bolivia offered to serve on the committee along with and Dr. Margo Hulbert from SPAC, Dr. Alexandra Mallett from SAC, and Fany Ramos Quispe from the Belmont Forum.
159. Panama presented two draft decisions from the Committee related to establishing an Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Advisory Committee (IP&LC-AC) to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties Decision, draft Decisions XXXI/16 and XXXI/17 provided in the annex of this report.
160. Canada, the United States, Bolivia, Guatemala, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and Panama supported this proposal.
161. The Executive Director noted the EDI policy will transform the work of the IAI.
162. CoP-31 adopted draft Decisions XXXI/16 and XXXI/17.
163. The Chair closed this agenda item and the meeting took note of the report.

Agenda item 13 c): Summary report on Communications

164. The Chair invited the Executive Director to present on this section of the report.
165. The Executive Director presented the communication strategy and achievements of the IAI. This year the IAI hired a consultant as a full-time community manager.
166. She began by introducing the efforts by the Directorate to reach different audiences interested in the scientific knowledge and research results made available by the IAI to its Parties through the IAI's website and social media accounts.

⁶ See IAI/COP/INFO/8 IAI Gender and EDI Policy Implementation Draft:
<https://www.iai.int/administrador/assets/images/ckfinder/files/IAI%20EDI%20Implementation%20Plan%202023.pdf>.

167. She described efforts to bring timely information on IAI events, current science, and training and funding opportunities to the IAI network by publishing and disseminating newsletters and other communication materials.

168. She stated that the use of the IAI's website and social media has contributed to enhancing the communication of scientific knowledge and results that are relevant to the region, including for policymakers and partners, and promoting the objectives of the Parties.

Agenda Item 13.d: Report on implementation of the IAI strategic plan: The regional assessment

This item was presented after item 8 of the agenda.

Agenda item 13 e): Summary report of the association of the Belmont Forum and the CRA

169. The Executive Director of the Belmont Forum, Dr. Nicole Arbour, summarized Belmont's association with the IAI through a pre-recorded video.

170. The IAI's Executive Director then presented on the participation of the IAI in three Collaborative Research Actions (CRAs) of the Belmont Forum: Integrated Approaches to Human Migration/Mobility in an Era of Rapid Global Change, Climate, Environment and Health II (CEH 2), and Amazonia and Tropical Forests⁷.

171. She stated that IAI is organizing in-person workshops with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI), Instituto Humboldt from Colombia, Instituto Amazónico de Investigaciones Científicas (SINCHI) and Society for Anthropology (SALSA) to identify priorities for the funding call on Amazonia and Tropical Forests. The IAI is leading this CRA with FAPESP.

172. The Chair of the meeting emphasized the relevance of migration in Panama.

173. Brazil asked how a Belmont Forum call is launched.

174. The United States explained that one member of the Belmont must propose a topic for a funding call at the Belmont plenary, and other members must express interest in scoping it. Funding agencies that participate in the call decide on the eligibility and restrictions of using their funds. Additional information about eligibility and the review process is provided on the Belmont Forum webpage.

⁷ The IAI Annex for CEH2 is available here:

<https://www.iai.int/en/news/detail/Collaborative-Research-Action-on-Climate-Environment-and-Health-II>.

Agenda item 14: Determination of the time and venue of the next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties

- 175. Bolivia and Canada offered to jointly host the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties meeting, CoP-32, via videoconference in 2024 per the adopted decision to host virtual meetings of the CoP biennially.
- 176. Paraguay expressed interest in hosting the 2025 in-person meeting of the CoP-33.
- 177. The CoP-31 adopted Decisions XXXI/22 and XXXI/23 under this agenda item, which are provided in the report's annex.

Agenda item 9 (resume): Election of SAC and SPAC

- 178. Nine countries voted and accepted the recommendation of the committee.
- 179. The candidates elected were: Pedro Laterra (Argentina) for the vacancy as member of the SAC and Laura Ramajo (Chile) for the vacancy of alternate member in the SAC; and Carlos Joly (Brazil), Gilma Mantilla (Colombia) and Inty Arcos (Ecuador) for the three vacancies on the SPAC.

Closing remarks

- 180. The Chair opened the floor for closing remarks.
- 181. The United States thanked and congratulated the organizers and emphasized the important decisions to convene in person every two years and to establish the Science Diplomacy Center. She highlighted that the IAI is always at the forefront of key global change initiatives in the Americas and globally.
- 182. The meeting was closed with a round of closing remarks by Parties, the Host country, and the IAI Directorate.
- 183. The Parties praised the organization of the event.
- 184. The Chair thanked all the Parties for their participation and support of the IAI.
- 185. The Executive Director thanked the Parties, the SAC, the SPAC and the Observers for their participation and support of the IAI, with special thanks to Panama for hosting CoP-31.
- 186. The meeting was closed on 22 June at 5:10 PM (PTY).

Section II

Decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its thirty-first meeting.

**Decisions of the 31st Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Inter-American Institute
for Global Change Research
Panama City, Panama
21-22 June 2023**

REPORT OF THE 30TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXXI/1. The Conference of the Parties approves the Report of the 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

XXXI/2. The Conference of the Parties approves the report of the 2023 Extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

CORE BUDGET FOR FY 2023-2024 AND PRELIMINARY REQUEST FOR 2024-2026

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXXI/3. The Conference of the Parties accepts and approves the Core Budget for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the preliminary request for fiscal years 2024-2026.

AUDITORS REPORT

Directed to the Conference of the Parties

XXXI/4. The Conference of the Parties approves the Independent Auditors report.

JOINT REPORT OF THE SAC/SPAC

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXI/5: The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to establish a research and training program on the nexus of climate, environment and health to support decision making by Parties, considering human health and the health of all life systems, in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other regional and global partners, to seek extramural research funding to support these activities, and to identify other relevant partners that may assist in addressing this issue at local, sub-national, national and regional scales and in global and multilateral fora.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXI/6: The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to establish a research and training program on the nexus of oceans, islands, coastal systems aligned with the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science, to support decision making by Parties, to seek extramural research funding to support these activities, and to identify partners.

XXXI/7: The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to engage with IAI Parties during international multilateral science-policy convenings, such as the meetings of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Science Summit of the United Nations General Assembly, among others, and to seek external financial resources to sponsor an IAI delegation comprised of senior and early career scientists to disseminate relevant research with a global community, to strengthen engagement with decision makers, to increase the visibility and participation of scientists from the region, and to increase the capacity of the region to participate in international negotiations.

Directed to the Parties

XXXI/8: The Conference of the Parties is invited to meet in-person biennially and via videoconferencing during the intervening years, to increase equitable participation of the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Science-Policy Advisory Committee and Parties, to begin the implementation of a sponsored delegates program for the provision of financial assistance to facilitate the participation of Parties at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, and to reduce the carbon footprint of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXI/9: The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to participate in the HydroClimate Research Program of the Andes (ANDEX), under the umbrella of the Global Energy and Water Exchanges Project (GEWEX) of the World Climate Research Programme, to link it with other regional and global platforms, to communicate the advances of ANDEX to the Parties, and to seek extramural research funding to support these activities.

INVITATION TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE OF THE INSTITUTE

Directed to Parties

XXXI/10. The Conference of the Parties is encouraged to invite the University of the West Indies to become an Associate of the Institute.

XXXI/11. The Conference of the Parties is encouraged to invite the Centro de Investigación para el Cambio Global (CICAG) of the National University of Asunción to become an Associate of the Institute.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXI/12: On behalf of the Conference of the Parties, the IAI Directorate is tasked with drafting an invitation to the University of the West Indies to become an Associate of the Institute and preparing an Agreement of Association.

XXXI/13: On behalf of the Conference of the Parties, the IAI Directorate is tasked with drafting an invitation to the Centro de Investigación para el Cambio Global (CICAG) to become an Associate of the Institute and preparing an Agreement of Association.

THE GENDER, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

Directed to Parties

XXXI/14: The Conference of the Parties instructs the Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee to update, monitor and guide the implementation of the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for IAI Scientific Projects and Capacity Building Activities during each intersessional period and report on progress during each meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

XXX/15: The Conference of the Parties invites the Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee to adopt its own rules of procedure.

XXXI/16: The Conference of the Parties instructs the IAI Directorate to establish an Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Advisory Committee (IP&LC-AC) to make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties regarding the Scientific Agenda, IAI Strategic Plan, and the annual program of the Institute thereby strengthening the work of the Institute and facilitating the equitable participation and contributions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

XXXI/17: The Conference of the Parties instructs the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Advisory Committee to adopt its own rules of procedure.

THE SCIENCE DIPLOMACY CENTER

Directed to Parties

XXXI/18. The Conference of the Parties approves the creation of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center and its work plan for the first three years based on the recommendations of the Science Diplomacy Center Advisory Board.

Directed to the IAI Directorate

XXXI/19. The IAI Directorate is instructed to develop and implement the activities under the Science Diplomacy Center, as appropriate and subject to the availability of external financial resources, and to report on its development at future meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to Parties

XXXI/20. The Parties are encouraged to work with the Science Diplomacy Center Advisory Board with the support of the IAI Directorate in the development and support of the Center programs and activities.

XXXI/21. The Parties are encouraged to participate in the programs and activities of the Science Diplomacy Center and contribute to the work of the Center with a view to fostering science policy dialogue and enhancement of collaboration related to global environmental change in the Americas.

VENUES OF THE NEXT REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Directed to the Parties

XXXI/22. The Conference of the Parties accepts the offer of Bolivia and Canada to co-host the 32nd meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held via videoconferencing.

XXXI/23. The Conference of the Parties accepts the offer of Paraguay to host the 33rd meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Asunción, Paraguay.