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**Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the International Solar Alliance**  
**25 September 2023**  
**New Delhi, Republic of India**

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## **Report of the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**

### **Summary**

This document presents the report of the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)

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### Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) commenced with the Hon'ble President of the ISA Assembly extending a warm welcome to the members of the Standing Committee and the ISA Secretariat.
2. The President acknowledged and appreciated the members for their continued support and efforts in advancing the goals of ISA and its initiatives. The President emphasised that the world is at a critical juncture, marked by pressing issues like climate change, energy security, and equitable development. During India's Presidency, the G20 leaders' declaration highlighted the significance of expanding clean power generation, particularly renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, to advance development and shift towards low-emission energy systems. Solar energy has emerged as a leader in the global energy transition, with over 1050 gigawatts of solar panels installed worldwide by 2022, accompanied by significant solar investments amounting to USD 380 billion in the same year.
3. The President highlighted a growing commitment to clean energy based on increasing figures. However, challenges persist, especially in developing areas, as 9% of the global population (675 million homes) lacked electricity access in 2021. If current progress continues, around 660 million homes (approximately 8% of the world population) may still lack electricity access by 2030
4. The President stressed the unwavering commitment of the ISA to provide affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy for all. To achieve this, the ISA has set ambitious targets: mobilising \$1 trillion in solar investments and deploying 1,000 gigawatts of solar capacity by 2030. These goals are crucial for global energy transition and economic growth. Initiatives like the Global Solar Facility for Africa and nine programmes of the ISA spanning sectors like agriculture, health, transport, battery storage, heating and cooling, green hydrogen, and capacity building contribute significantly to a more sustainable world.
5. The President acknowledged the ongoing challenges posed by climate change and that a large number of people worldwide still do not have access to solar energy benefits. However, the President expressed confidence in the unwavering commitment of Member Countries and the innovative spirit of partners, who believes that the ISA would continue lead towards a more sustainable and equitable energy future.

6. ***Decision: As the Chair of the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee, the President officially declared the meeting open and in session.***

#### **Agenda Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda**

7. The President invited the Standing Committee to review and provide input on the Provisional Agenda for the Ninth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee contained in the working document **ISA/SC.09/WD.01**
8. ***Decision: The Standing Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda for the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the ISA as contained in the Working Document ISA/SC.09/WD.01.***

#### **Agenda Item 3. Selection of Rapporteur**

9. The President informed the Committee that the People's Republic of Bangladesh had agreed to serve as the Rapporteur for the Ninth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee and expressed his gratitude for their support during the Eighth Meeting of the Standing Committee as the Rapporteur.
10. The President invited the Standing Committee to appoint the People's Republic of Bangladesh as the Rapporteur for the Ninth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee.
11. ***Decision: The Standing Committee appointed the People's Republic of Bangladesh as the Rapporteur for the Ninth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee.***

#### **Agenda Item 4. Confirmation of the report of the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee**

12. The President stated that pursuant to Rule 23 of Annexure 2 of the Rules of Procedure for the ISA Standing Committee, the report had been placed for the consideration of the Committee. The President invited the members of the Committee to confirm the report of the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee and to provide their comments and guidance.
13. ***Decision: The Standing Committee confirmed the report of the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee as contained in the Working Document ISA/SC.09/03.***

#### **Agenda Item 5. Action Taken Report of the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee**

14. The President invited the ISA Secretariat to consider the Action Taken Report of the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee as contained in the working document **ISA/SC.09/WD.04.**

15. The President invited comments and suggestions from the Members of the Standing Committee on the Action Taken Report of the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee.
16. **Decision: The Standing Committee noted the action taken by the ISA Secretariat as contained in the working document ISA/SC.09/WD.04.**

#### **Agenda Item 6. Revised ISA Viability Gap Funding Mechanism**

17. The President noted that during the Eighth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee, the ISA Secretariat had proposed to revise the ISA Viability Gap Funding (VGF) mechanism since no proposals for VGF had been received from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDs). Countries had expressed concerns that the maximum available VGF was inadequate for their projects. Consequently, the ISA Secretariat was requested to present a detailed design for restructuring the VGF mechanism for presentation to the Standing Committee during its Ninth Meeting.
18. The President invited the ISA Secretariat to present the revised VGF mechanism.
19. The Director General apprised the Standing Committee on the revised VGF mechanism. Under the revised mechanism, the VGF amount would range from 10% to 35% of the project cost, depending on the capacity and needs of the countries and their respective projects. The validity of the scheme was proposed to be three years, starting from CY 2024, with a shift of the current budget provision of USD 1.5 million from 2023 to 2024. He also noted that proposals would be considered on a first-come, first-serve basis, subject to the availability of budget provisions, and detailed guidelines would be presented to the Standing Committee during its Tenth Meeting.
20. The President agreed that the revised VGF mechanism would afford more time to the Member Countries to avail the VGF, which would be helpful to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and make the mechanism workable.
21. The President invited comments and suggestions from the members of the Standing Committee on the revised VGF mechanism.
22. **Decision: The Standing committee recommended the revised ISA Viability Gap Funding Mechanism to be placed in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its consideration and approval.**

**Agenda Item 7. Summary of the Annual Report for CY 2023**

23. The President stated that the Annual Report comprehensively showcases ongoing and completed projects, significant milestones achieved, and success stories of the ISA. Furthermore, he emphasised that the Annual Report for CY 2023 will highlight key aspects, including an overview of ISA programmes, projects, initiatives, accomplishments and impact, and future goals.
24. The President invited the ISA Secretariat to present the summary of the Annual Report for CY 2023
25. The Director General apprised the Standing Committee that the Annual Report of ISA for CY 2023 is nearing completion. He noted that while a summary was being presented at the Standing Committee Meeting, a comprehensive report would be presented during the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly. Recalling the 2022 Annual Report, which covered the period between the 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly in 2021 and till December 2022, he stated that the Annual Report 2023 would cover the period from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. The report would encompass key areas like analytics and advocacy, capacity building, and various programmes and project implementation. Specific sections of the report will delve into flagship initiatives and activities like global partnerships, the SolarX Start-up Challenge, the Global Solar Facility, and the OSOWOG initiative. Additionally, the report would outline the current strategic approach of the ISA and its guiding strategies for the future.
26. The ISA Secretariat presented to the Standing Committee the summary of the Annual Report for CY 2023 as contained in the working document **ISA/SC.09/WD.06**. Outlining the approach in preparing the Annual Report 2023, the ISA Secretariat proposed that the Annual Report 2023 to be placed in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly would cover the period between January 2023 till the Assembly Session, while incorporating placeholders for activities to be undertaken between October and December 2023 including the Assembly Session, COP28 and the country mission to Bhutan. After completion of the activities in December 2023, a completed Annual Report will be presented to the Hon'ble President of the ISA Assembly for approval before circulation to all ISA members. The Secretariat stressed that the proposed changes would not only enhance the relevance of the ISA Annual Reports but would also serve as a testament to the ISA Secretariat's commitment to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.
27. The President invited the Standing Committee to provide comments on the summary of the Annual Report.
28. **The President directed the ISA Secretariat to circulate the Annual Report 2023 as proposed to the Member Countries well ahead of the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly.**

29. **Decision: The Standing Committee considered the proposed changes for the preparation and circulation of the ISA Annual Report 2023 and recommended the proposed report to be placed in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its consideration and approval.**

**Agenda Item 8. Audited Financial Statement of the ISA**

30. The President stated that the audited financial statement of the ISA for CY 2022 had been prepared in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the ISA Assembly and that the statement would be presented during the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its review and approval.
31. The President invited the ISA Secretariat to present the Audited Financial Report of the ISA for CY 2022.
32. The Director General informed that the completed Audited Financial Statement for CY 2022 has been circulated to all Members of the working document **ISA/SC.09/WD.07**.
33. The ISA Secretariat presented the Audited Financial Statement for CY 2022 and informed the Standing Committee that the external auditors noted no material issue or risk.
34. The President invited comments and suggestions from the members of the Standing Committee on the Audited Financial Statement for CY 2022.
35. **Decision: The Standing Committee recommended the Audited Financial Statement of ISA for CY 2022 to be placed in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its consideration.**

**Agenda Item 9. Revised organisational structure and proposal for new positions at the ISA Secretariat**

36. The President stated that the ISA Secretariat had proposed new staff positions, some of which were in accordance with Article 10 (Internal Oversight) of the Manual of Regulations of the ISA Secretariat.
37. The President invited the ISA Secretariat to brief the Standing Committee on the proposed new positions at the ISA Secretariat and the revised organisational structure.
38. The Director General provided an update on the revised organisational structure and a proposal for new positions at the ISA Secretariat. He explained that the organisational structure as approved during the Fifth Session of the ISA Assembly, consisted of 50 Fixed Term Positions (FTAs), excluding the Director General's position. Article 10 of the ISA Manual of Regulations requires the Director General to establish an internal oversight mechanism

covering areas such as internal audit, evaluation, investigation, and other management support to enhance the functioning of the ISA. The DG also highlighted the need to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and the Governance and Partnerships Unit due to their increased scope of work. To that end, the DG proposed the creation of six new FTAs, including four positions in the Internal Oversight Unit comprising the Chief of Unit, Audit Specialist, Evaluation Specialist, and Grievance Officer and additionally one Programme Analyst position each in the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and the Governance and Partnerships Unit.

39. The representative of the French Republic expressed gratitude for the consideration of their proposal to include the seconded experts in the ISA Secretariat organogram.
40. The President sought clarity on the necessity of a Grievance Officer in the Internal Oversight Unit when a Chief of the unit, an Audit specialist, and an Evaluation specialist were in place. The President also sought clarification on the distinctions between an Audit specialist and an Evaluation Specialist, emphasising the importance of ensuring that newly created positions held significance.
41. In response, the Director General explained that while the role of the Audit specialist would primarily centre around financial matters of the ISA pertaining to procurement and payment processes, the Evaluation Specialist would ensure that the evaluations carried out by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit adhere to the set work processes. Further, he elaborated that the Grievance officer's role pertained to handling complaints made by staff members, particularly concerning actions taken against them. This responsibility would be predominantly managed by the legal section of the ISA, with a relatively junior Grievance Officer assigned for coordination purposes.
42. The President underlined the greater capacity of the Chief of the Internal Oversight Unit, as a senior staff member, to effectively handle staff grievances compared to a junior Grievance Officer. The President recommended that the Chief of the Unit assume the role of Grievance Officer without the need for appointing a junior-level Grievance Officer. Additionally, he stated that all Chief of Units should be responsible for addressing grievances within their respective units. If any grievance cannot be resolved at the unit level, only then it should be brought to the Chief of the Internal Oversight Unit.
43. The President commended the ISA Secretariat for setting up the Internal Oversight Unit and working towards strengthening the necessary oversight function of the ISA.
44. ***Decision: The Standing Committee recommended the revised organisational structure and proposal for new positions at the ISA Secretariat, excluding the position of the proposed Grievance Officer as contained in the working document ISA/SC.09/WD.08 to be placed in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its consideration and approval.***

**Agenda Item 10. Update on the work plan and budget for CY 2023 and proposed work plan and budget for CY 2024**

45. The President invited the ISA Secretariat to present the update on the ISA work plan and budget for CY 2023 and the proposed work plan and budget for CY 2024 as contained in the working document **ISA/SC.09/WD.09**.
46. The ISA Secretariat presented an update on the work plan and budget for CY 2023 and the proposed work plan and budget for CY 2024.
47. The President inquired why the project had been halted in Sudan. In response, the DG explained that the project had been delayed due to political instability in Sudan. The President suggested moving the project to another country and sanctioning other projects in Sudan once the political situation stabilised.
48. The President inquired with the ISA Secretariat about their capacity to utilise the allocated budget for Management Support, Communications, and Outreach from 1 September 2023 to 31 December 2023. In response, the Director General clarified that the significant expenditures for Communications and Outreach were linked to COP28 and the ISA Assembly further the budget had been determined based on the previous year's expenditures. The President expressed his intention to review the expenses associated with Communication and Outreach and the Management Support costs. He acknowledged that while the Programmatic Support expenses appeared ambitious, they were justifiable, indicating a commitment to completing projects on schedule.
49. The representative of the French Republic expressed optimism for the ISA STAR-C initiative, which is supported by the French Republic. He conveyed keen interest in the pilot initiative "Solar for She", deeming it highly interesting and desired to gain a deeper understanding of this initiative. He further expressed the intent of the French Republic to support the ISA in implementing Programme 9, Solar for Green Hydrogen initiative, emphasising the focus on hard-to-decarbonise sectors like Transport and Industry. He assured the support of the French Republic in mobilising the French Companies to contribute to the ISA activities involving the private sector under the ISA Corporate Advisory group. Furthermore, the representative inquired about the status of the GGI-OSOWOG Initiative and requested an update on how the ISA Secretariat will contribute to its implementation.
50. In response, the Director General expressed his gratitude to the French Republic for supporting the STAR C Initiative. He thanked the French Republic for their interest in the "Solar for She" Programme, emphasising its status as a pioneering initiative, and expressed anticipation of the support of the French Republic in this regard. The Director General

informed that significant progress had been made in the GGI-OSOWOG initiative during the year, with the completion of the study being a notable achievement.

51. The President underscored the significant interest in establishing grid Interconnections across continents, mentioning the numerous studies currently underway and ongoing talks with India's neighbouring countries and regions, like the discussions with Singapore regarding an Undersea Cable Connection. He also mentioned advanced discussions with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia for interconnecting the Indian subcontinent with the Middle East Grid, which could potentially facilitate connections with the European and other regional grids. The President highlighted that connections with the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal had already been established, and efforts were in advanced stages to connect with the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. He emphasised the growing interest among countries, driven by the potential advantages of synchronised energy generation across different time zones. He concluded by mentioning plans to formalise an organisation for overseeing the international grid and having an inter-governmental agreement.
52. The Hon'ble Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, joining virtually, congratulated the ISA Secretariat for organising the Standing Committee Meeting. He expressed his pleasure regarding the collaboration between the ISA and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and underscored their longstanding support for the ISA, having become its Member Country in 2016. He emphasised the shared goal of enhancing collaboration and achieving significant advancements in solar deployment together. Additionally, he stated that participation in the ISA was expected to enable the People's Republic of Bangladesh to develop a series of viable solar projects and attract investments through guided policies and regulatory structures. He also highlighted the potential for expanding and replicating the solar initiatives.
53. The Hon'ble Minister mentioned that the country's Solar Strategy was anticipated to be in place by December 2026, and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was committed to cooperating in revising the country's solar roadmap for 2021 to 2041. He emphasised that solar energy was rapidly becoming a global preference, and the People's Republic of Bangladesh had been proactive in its solutions, with notable achievements such as a boosted renewable energy capacity of 1,200 megawatts, including 461 megawatts for solar parks. He informed that solar parks with a capacity of 1,250 megawatts were under construction, and projects totalling 9,000 megawatts were in the development phase. Rooftop Solar initiatives were also in place, and with the right policies and regulations, investments in solar energy could be expedited.
54. The Minister expressed that the collaborative goal was to enhance institutional capacities, secure investments, and expand solar initiatives. He was pleased to learn that after finalising the Country Partnership, a study in collaboration with the power division had undertaken

feasibility studies for various solar projects in the country, including solar-powered agricultural applications, cold storage applications in health services, and various rooftop and floating solar products. To ensure smooth execution, the Minister mentioned that an Execution Committee and a Steering Committee had been formed. He believed these Committees would play a crucial role in mentoring the quality of solar technology and its applications in the country. He also expressed delight at the assistance of the ISA in setting up the STAR Centre in the People's Republic of Bangladesh and expressed confidence that the centre would promote knowledge exchange, ensure the quality of solar products, boost technological and financial capacities, and introduce innovative technologies. In conclusion, the Hon'ble Minister extended his gratitude to the International Solar Alliance for its visionary approach and unwavering support.

55. The President thanked the Hon'ble Minister for his remarks.
56. The representative from the Kingdom of Sweden observed that the ISA Secretariat's goal of raising USD 100 million for the Global Solar Facility seemed quite ambitious. He requested additional clarification regarding the Global Solar Facility, particularly considering the programme budget of USD 7 million, which presented a noticeable disparity from the goal of USD 100 million. Consequently, he welcomed any insights from the ISA Secretariat regarding this matter.
57. In response, the President clarified that USD 7 million and USD 100 million served different purposes. The USD 7 million represented the budget of the Assembly, funded by contributions revenues covering the ISA operational expenses. On the other hand, the Global Solar Facility would be structured separately, functioning as a Global Fund. This Fund would be financed through contributions from entities like the Green Climate Fund and various financial institutions.
58. The Director General elaborated on the rationale behind creating the Global Solar Facility. He highlighted that the inception of the Global Solar Facility was prompted by the context of global solar investments, which were projected to reach USD 380 billion in 2023, of which only 3% were allocated to Africa, despite the continent having the highest solar insolation.
59. The President added that the Republic of India had achieved significant progress with a capacity of nearly 190,000 MW, primarily consisting of non-fossil fuel capacity, of which approximately 185,000 MW came from Renewable Sources. He underscored that the majority of investments for establishing renewable energy capacities in India came from the private sector. The President recognised that Africa encountered barriers to investments, such as Payment and Sovereign Expropriation Risks, which discouraged private sector investments in the continent. To address these challenges and as a measure to de-risk investments, the ISA is establishing the Global Solar Facility, which would operate as a Quasi-Commercial Fund. The President applauded the ISA for its concerted efforts in operationalising the facility and

stressed on the importance of developed countries assisting the African countries by contributing to the fund.

60. ***Decision: The Standing Committee recommended the update on the ISA work plan and budget for CY 2023 and the proposed work plan and budget for CY 2024 to be placed in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its consideration and approval.***

#### **Agenda Item 11. Granting of Partner Organisation Status**

61. The President informed the Standing Committee that since the Fifth Session of the ISA Assembly, the ISA had established three new partnerships with International Organisations in accordance with Article VIII of the ISA Framework Agreement. These partnerships included the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the West African Development Bank (BOAD) and Africa50.
62. The President invited the Standing Committee to review the working document containing the Memorandum of Understanding between the ISA and the three organisations and to recommend the organisations (ICAO, BOAD and Africa50) to the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for grant of Partner Organisation status.
63. ***Decision: The Standing Committee recommended placing the proposal of the ISA Secretariat to grant Partner Organisation status to ICAO, BOAD and Africa50 in the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly for its approval.***

#### **Agenda Item 12. Provisional Agenda for the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly**

64. The President stated that the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly was scheduled from 30 October to 1 November 2023 in New Delhi. He mentioned that the ISA Secretariat had prepared the Provisional Agenda for the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly, considering the agenda items presented at the Eighth and Ninth Meeting of the ISA Standing Committee. The President invited the Standing Committee to share any comments they might have on the Provisional Agenda for the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly.
65. The representative from the French Republic expressed their agreement on the Provisional Agenda and requested that the list of Prospective Members and candidates for the Observer Status be shared. He informed the arrival of a new seconded expert from the French Republic to the ISA Secretariat, expected to join by mid-October. The French Republic requested an update on the One Sun, One World, One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative be included in the Agenda of the Assembly.

66. The President directed the ISA Secretariat to circulate an update on the OSOWOG initiative to the members.

67. ***Decision: The Standing Committee recommended the Provisional Agenda for the Sixth Session of the ISA Assembly to be placed in the ISA Assembly for its adoption.***

#### **Agenda Item 13. Interventions by the Member Countries**

68. The President invited interventions from the members of the Standing Committee.

69. The representative from the Kingdom of Denmark expressed their delight at collaborating with the ISA as a Regional Vice President, along with their involvement in various other initiatives. He shared that they are currently in the process of preparing for their secondment. Additionally, he informed the Standing Committee about their progress in developing a project report for Africa centred around Green Hydrogen, supported by wind and solar energy sources. He reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the ISA and their dedication to expanding their support in the future.

70. **The President thanked the Kingdom of Denmark for their interventions.**

#### **Agenda Item 14. Any other business**

71. The President invited the Members to table any other business they want to discuss.

72. **No other business was proposed for discussion.**

#### **Agenda Item 15. Closing of the Meeting**

73. The President of ISA expressed his gratitude to the members of the Standing Committee as he brought the meeting to a close. While congratulating the ISA for their commendable work, he urged the ISA Secretariat to continue to expand the footprint and reach of the ISA to even more countries with solutions across the realm of technology, regulatory frameworks, and funding. He strongly advocated for a dedicated Fund to help de-risk investments in Solar.

74. The President requested the Depository for an update on the Membership status. The Depository updated the Committee that there are currently 116 countries that have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.

75. The President expressed gratitude to the members of the Standing Committee for their steadfast support and continued cooperation. He emphasised that the work undertaken by the ISA to provide energy access to those in need is a noble and significant endeavour. The

President urged all members to actively participate in advancing the mission of the ISA through Annual Voluntary Contributions to the ISA.

76. The President congratulated the Members of the Standing Committee for their role in shaping the future of the ISA through its Governance Meetings and extended his thanks to all the members for their participation. He thanked the Director General and the ISA Secretariat for organising and facilitating the meeting.

**77. The President declared the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of the ISA closed.**

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