

Fifth Meeting of the Regional Committee for the Africa Region
30 August – 1 September 2023
Kigali, Rwanda

Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Committee for the Africa Region

Summary

The working document contains the report of the Fifth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region

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Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The Hon'ble Regional Vice President and Chair of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region, The Federal Republic of Somalia opened the Meeting by welcoming the Regional Co-Vice President - the Republic of Mali, Hon'ble Ministers, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and heads of delegations of the ISA Member, Signatory, and Prospective Countries of the Africa Region, other excellencies and the Director General, ISA.
2. The Chair noted the significant solar potential of Africa, receiving an annual average solar irradiation of 2119 kilowatt hours per square meter, indicating a solar technical potential of 7900 GW for the continent. Despite Africa holding 60% of the world's solar resources, it contributes only 1% to the global installed solar photovoltaic capacity. The Vice-President mentioned countries like South Africa, Morocco, and Egypt leading solar power development, with recent growth observed. In 2022, 49 African countries planned capacities of at least 1 MW of solar, and 29 countries exceeded 100 MW.
3. Acknowledging the challenges ahead, the Chair emphasized the need to address financing, infrastructure, and regulatory hurdles. Collaboration between governments, private enterprises, and local communities was highlighted as crucial to unlocking Africa's full solar energy potential. The Vice-President praised the International Solar Alliance's role in promoting international collaboration for sustainable development. The ISA, with its commitment, aims to catalyse the clean energy transition across the region through nine comprehensive programs covering various sectors, including agriculture, health, transportation, storage, and green hydrogen.
4. The Hon'ble Regional Vice President and Chair commended the ISA for its relentless efforts in driving the global energy transition. The following notable initiatives launched by the ISA were shared with the committee.
 - Solar Technology Application Resource Centres or STAR-C to function as training centres and centres of excellence for testing and development of specifications and standards and serve as information centres to support governments and the private sector on solar energy projects.
 - Solar Finance Facility to support the development of bankable solar projects and stimulate financing through financing vehicles.
 - SolarX Start-up Challenge to incubate solar start-ups by handholding them to give access to manufacturers, suppliers, and investors.
5. The Chair invited His Excellency Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, ISA to deliver his address.
6. The Director General, ISA thanked the Chair and on behalf of the ISA Secretariat, proceeded to welcome the Hon'ble Ministers, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and heads of delegations of the

ISA Member, Signatory, and Prospective Countries of the Africa Region and other esteemed excellencies. He extended his special thanks to the Republic of Rwanda for hosting this crucial meeting.

7. The Director General, ISA expressed immense pleasure at the diverse representation of countries gathered to foster cooperation and dialogue in Africa. He celebrated Africa's progress in solar technology, highlighting advancements in photovoltaic cells, energy storage, and grid integration. These developments have made solar energy a more affordable and sustainable alternative, cheaper than diesel options. The Director General emphasized the crucial need for upfront capital, stressing collaboration with financial institutions to secure funding with favourable loan terms and interest rates.
8. Acknowledging the solar potential of African countries, especially Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, and Mali, which lead with 62% of the total installed solar capacity, the Director General underscored the ISA's mission to shape a solar-powered future for the region and beyond. The urgent challenge of climate change was highlighted, and the Director General stressed the importance of sharing best practices and implementing joint strategies to mitigate its impacts.
9. The Director General emphasized the significance of addressing barriers to solar adoption, promoting innovative financing, and enhancing capacity-building initiatives. Leveraging collective expertise was seen as pivotal in unlocking solar energy's full potential and making substantial contributions to climate change mitigation.
10. Additionally, the Director General mentioned plans to support 20 African solar start-ups, providing them with financial aid, technology support, and branding assistance, aiming to transform them into successful enterprises. Gratitude was extended to all delegates, and the Director General emphasized the meeting's importance in working together to achieve a solar-powered world, making this Committee meeting a resounding success.
11. The Chair while thanking the Director General, ISA expressed gratitude towards the Africa Region for their active membership and ongoing support for the Alliance. He encouraged the ISA Secretariat to strengthen its engagement with the Membership at the regional level. The Chair extended another welcome to all attendees at the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Committee, expressing hope for a productive and successful session benefiting energy access and transition in the region.
12. As the Vice President and Chair of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region, He officially opened the meeting, declaring it in session.

Agenda Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda

18. The President invited the Regional Committee to consider the Provisional Agenda for the Fifth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region as contained in the working document ISA/RCA.05/WD.01 and provide their inputs and guidance.

19. The Regional Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda for the for the Fifth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region as contained in the working document ISA/RCA.05/WD.01

Agenda Item 3. Action Taken Report of the Fourth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region

20. The Chair introduced the next agenda item: the Action Taken Report from the Fourth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee the Africa Region, found in Working Document ISA/RCA.05/WD.03. This report outlines the ISA Secretariat's actions in response to the committee's recommendations made during the fourth meeting in 2022. The Chair acknowledged the Secretariat's efforts in implementing these recommendations and invited committee members to review the report and offer their comments and guidance.
21. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Rwanda noted that that the Action Taken Report mentioned the ISA Secretariat working on a Report for Solar Waste Management, with its recommendations serving as a Policy Advisory for the Republic of India. She requested that this Report should address the global challenge, particularly focusing on the African Continent.
22. In response, the Director General, ISA explained that the mentioned report drew from the experiences of the Indian subcontinent. He assured that it would be further developed into a Regional Document to encompass broader perspectives, especially considering the unique challenges faced by the African Continent.
23. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Republic of Nigeria mentioned that during the previous meeting in Addis Ababa, there was a proposal discussed regarding the aggregation of projects in various countries and floating a common tender. However, this proposal was not reflected in the Action Taken Report that was presented.
24. In response, the Director General of ISA sincerely apologized and instructed the ISA Secretariat to include the mentioned proposal in the report. He also shared an experience from a couple of years ago where the ISA Secretariat had attempted a similar initiative to aggregate demand for Solar Pumps among ISA Member Countries. The Secretariat had encountered challenges due to varying local laws and procurement policies in each country.
25. In this specific case, he explained that instead of calling for bids for the direct procurement of pumps, they had initiated a bidding process for a price discovery mechanism. This approach enabled countries to determine the best price for procurement. Subsequently, member countries proceeded to procure the pumps through their own methods, using the discovered price as a reference point
26. The Chair requested the ISA Secretariat to take a note of the same.
27. With no further interventions forthcoming the Chair proceeded to the next agenda.

Agenda Item 4. Report of the Director General on ISA programmes and activities

28. The Chair announced the next agenda item: the Report of the Director General on the ISA Programmes and activities highlighting that the ISA Assembly's Fifth Session had approved the ISA Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2026. This plan serves as a comprehensive roadmap to fulfil the ISA's mandate outlined in its Framework Agreement.
29. The Chair invited the ISA Secretariat to present an overview of progress made under the Five-Year Strategic Plan and share insights into upcoming activities.
30. The Director General, ISA expressed gratitude for the Fifth Session of the ISA Assembly's approval of the Five-year Strategic Plan. This plan guides the ISA's efforts in addressing Energy Access, Energy Security, and Energy Transition. Notable achievements included:
 - Policy and Capacity Building Assistance:** The ISA trained 3,510 individuals and initiated STAR-C centres in seven countries. Collaboration with UNIDO aims to strengthen PV and solar thermal standards. Research on sustainable mini grids in Africa is ongoing, and private sector engagement is planned for 2023. He announced that the first STAR Centre was launched in Ethiopia in October 2022.
 - Programmatic Support:** ISA engaged Member Countries, making progress on 6 out of 27 funded projects.
 - Analytics and Advocacy Support:** ISA published the Ease of Doing Solar (EoDS) Report for 2022, assessing key drivers in each member country. Flagship reports on Solar Investments, Markets, and Technology was released, with second editions scheduled for 2023. The 'Global Supply Chain Resiliency' report was launched at the Clean Energy Ministerial in Goa.
 - Governance and Operational Management:** ISA will advocate for solar energy at COP28, aiming to name their pavilion "The Solar Hub" for this purpose.
31. The Director General, ISA credited Member Countries' enthusiasm and cooperation as instrumental in the ISA's accelerated work, leading to concrete steps for positive impacts across Member Countries. He also extended an invitation to the members to participate and host sessions on solar at the Hub.
32. The Director General, ISA invited the ISA Secretariat to give a detailed presentation on the same.
33. The ISA Secretariat delivered a detailed presentation on the progress made under the Five-Year Strategic Plan and shared insights into the upcoming activities.
34. The Chair thanked the ISA Secretariat for the presentation and invited comments and interventions from participants on the Agenda Item.
35. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Uganda commended the ISA Secretariat for their excellent work. He emphasized the significant opportunity Africa had due to the establishment and

progress of multiple Regional Power Pools. During the presentation, he highlighted a specific instance of capacity building initiatives undertaken by the ISA Secretariat for the West African Power Pool.

36. Additionally, he pointed out that the East African Power Pool, connecting major regions of Africa, was in its initial stages. He appealed for a forward-looking system to scale these initiatives efficiently. The representative expressed a keen interest in Green Hydrogen, recognizing its vast potential for Africa. He noted that while there was considerable discussion on innovative financing for solar projects, most of the funding would come from international organizations like the World Bank.
37. Addressing a recent challenge, he mentioned the new laws passed by the Ugandan government, which posed a hindrance to international funding due to concerns about homosexuality. He urged the members of the regional committee to explore financing beyond international organizations and strive to mobilize funds while respecting and protecting the rights, faith, culture, and integrity of the Republic of Uganda and the African Region.
38. He emphasized the shared and common interests of the region and implored members to actively seek alternative financing mechanisms that align with the interests of the Region.
39. The representative from the United Republic of Tanzania expressed gratitude towards the Director General of ISA, the Vice President and Chair from the Federal Republic of Somalia, and the host of the Regional Committee Meeting, the Republic of Rwanda. He sought clarity regarding the criteria used for selecting Member Countries and candidates for ISA's capacity building initiatives.
40. While congratulating ISA on their project support efforts, he inquired about the Monitoring & Evaluation mechanisms in place for both the capacity building and project support initiatives. While addressing programmatic support, he emphasized the positive aspect of many countries joining regional power grids. He welcomed ISA to focus on substantial and ambitious projects, emphasizing the need for large-scale initiatives and support for solar energy. He acknowledged the challenges faced by numerous African nations, particularly in their limited capacity for power production, and emphasized the crucial need to increase power generation.
41. Furthermore, he highlighted the urgency of diversifying the energy mix, noting that most countries in Africa heavily rely on sources such as hydroelectricity and natural gas. He reiterated the invitation to ISA to conceptualize significant projects aimed not only at addressing climate change but also at improving lives and eradicating poverty in the region.
42. Director General, ISA responded appreciating the idea of working with power pools. He informed the committee that the ISA Secretariat had paid a visit to the West African Power Pool in The Republic of Benin and had signed a MoU with them. he said that the ISA would be delighted to work with the East African power Pool as well.
43. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' remarks on Green Hydrogen, the Director General of ISA informed the Committee that the ISA Secretariat had conducted research on the potential for the

Mauritania–Morocco region, South Africa, Namibia, and Egypt. He stated that the ISA would be more than willing to explore similar initiatives for other regions as well

44. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' remarks on innovation in finance, the Director General of ISA expressed agreement, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts in focusing on sustainable finance. He highlighted the importance of financial strategies that can endure and remain resilient even amidst policy changes.
45. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' query about the selection criteria for candidates and Member Countries for capacity building initiatives, the Director General of ISA informed the Committee that ISA is currently accepting proposals from those interested. He also highlighted a caveat regarding the STAR Centres, mentioning that they are established following a Detailed Project Report (DPR) aligned with a country-specific solar roadmap. Additionally, he emphasized that ISA would be more than willing to support and assist any country seeking assistance in creating such a roadmap.
46. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' query regarding the existing Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms in place, the Director General emphasized that the sustainability of projects and initiatives was paramount for ISA. He clarified that in the current ongoing engagements, while the projects are funded by ISA, the operations and maintenance of these projects are the responsibility of the host country.
47. The Hon'ble representative from Burkina Faso expressed gratitude and drew attention to a significant concern. Despite Africa having the highest solar insolation globally, it only accounted for one percent of the total installed capacity. He attributed this issue to the lack of domestic capacity in manufacturing and development and emphasized the urgent need to develop these capabilities. He stressed that fostering domestic capabilities would enable competitive pricing, addressing a key challenge in the region.
48. Additionally, he commended ISA's mission to improve energy access and highlighted a major concern: grid connectivity. He inquired whether the ISA Secretariat would provide support in this aspect, underlining the importance of grid connectivity in ensuring effective energy access.
49. The Hon'ble representative from the Arab Republic of Egypt requested the ISA Secretariat to provide details and an update on battery storage and Green Hydrogen initiatives.
50. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Republic of Nigeria expressed gratitude to the host country, Rwanda, and the ISA Secretariat for organizing this important meeting. He noted that various countries might have different sources for hydrogen production and opined that there should be a reconsideration to colour the banding of Hydrogen, highlighting a recent discussion at the G20 Meeting.

51. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Republic of Rwanda requested an update on the Global Solar Facility, specifically inquiring about the fund's size and provisions for Africa. She also sought clarification on the mechanism determining the allocation and amounts from the fund. While acknowledging the progress made by the ISA Secretariat with demonstration projects, she emphasized that impactful change would come through large-scale solar initiatives.
52. Furthermore, she inquired about the status of voluntary contributions from the Members of the Regional Committee and urged them to consider the challenge of making maximum contributions to the Annual Voluntary Contribution. She stressed the importance of giving back, emphasizing that it's as crucial to give as it is to receive.
53. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Malawi expressed gratitude to the host, The Republic of Rwanda, and the ISA Secretariat, specifically acknowledging the efforts of the DG, ISA for the conduct of the Meeting. He made an observation regarding the regulatory support provided by ISA for Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). He emphasized that it is now imperative to establish a specialized body at the regional level. This body would comprise members from diverse national and regional regulatory authorities, aimed at creating future action plans, implementing them, and resolving disputes effectively.
54. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Senegal expressed gratitude to everyone and emphasized that the production of energy from renewable sources is a top priority for his government. He cited the example of Solar Street Lamps, along with the accompanying concerns. He expressed worries about the lack of established frameworks for recycling waste at the end of the lifecycle of these systems.
55. He urged the ISA Secretariat to address this challenge and suggested that looking at the European experience, where manufacturers are mandated and responsible for recycling, might provide valuable insights.
56. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Republic of Somalia while thanking everybody inquired whether the trainings as envisaged in the last Regional Committee Meeting are being conducted virtually or in-person. He emphasized the importance of conducting more in-person training sessions.
57. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia expressed gratitude and highlighted the significant role their membership played in solar energy advocacy. They emphasized the importance of greater integration into the grid, pointing out the vast untapped potential in solar energy integration. The representative noted that the East Africa Power Pool presented an excellent opportunity for this integration.
58. Additionally, they pointed out that despite Africa's high solar energy potential, many countries lacked necessary regulatory frameworks. This absence led to high tariffs, acting as barriers to private sector participation in solar energy initiatives. He requested the ISA Secretariat to work towards technology transfer for solar and work towards reducing these barriers.

59. The chair invited the DG, ISA to respond to the interventions made by the Hon'ble representatives of Member Countries.
60. The Director General of ISA expressed gratitude to the chair and acknowledged the diverse range of comments and observations made.
61. In response to the concern raised about reducing the cost of solar and increasing access through grid penetration, he wholeheartedly agreed that emphasizing the reduction of solar costs was crucial. Regarding enhancing access through grid penetration, he outlined two main challenges. The first was related to the manufacturing of equipment, an area ISA has begun addressing. The second challenge pertained to the delivery of electricity; an aspect ISA has been focusing on.
62. He highlighted the global investment scenario, noting an increase from \$250 billion in 2022 to \$350 billion this year. However, he pointed out a concerning trend: despite this substantial growth, 70% of all investments went to large-scale solar projects in OECD countries and China. Africa received a mere 3% of the available global finance. He advocated for investments in Mini and Micro-Grids, Roof-Top systems, Agri-photovoltaics, and other Distributed and Decentralised Renewable Energy Solutions.
63. The Director General informed the Committee about a study conducted by the ISA Secretariat, revealing that expanding the grid was still more expensive compared to providing for remote communities through Solar and Battery-based systems. He strongly urged prioritizing these systems over expanding grid penetration to enhance energy access. He reiterated ISA's commitment to continue collaborating with Africa to achieve this goal.
64. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' concerns about E-Waste and Recycling, the Director General, ISA emphasized that this issue is of paramount importance for the ISA. He highlighted the challenge posed by evolving technology and market offerings, citing an example of how solar panels manufactured twenty-five years ago have significantly changed compared to current models, and will continue to evolve in the future.
65. He posed crucial questions: what exactly needs to be recycled and how it can be recycled effectively. Recognizing the role of regulation, he pointed out the European experience of Extended Producer Responsibility and advocated for the need for global standards to facilitate easier recycling processes.
66. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' observations on Green Hydrogen, the Director General of ISA acknowledged that Green Hydrogen might not be a viable option for all countries due to context-specific drivers and dynamics that determine its effectiveness. He emphasized the importance of large markets for its commercial viability.
67. The Director General expressed the ISA Secretariat's support to Member Countries interested in exploring the Green Hydrogen possibility, highlighting the organization's readiness to assist those nations keen on pursuing this avenue.

68. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' query regarding Annual Voluntary Contributions, DG, ISA informed the Committee that all Member Countries had unanimously agreed to this during the last Assembly. The contribution amounts expected from Member Countries are as follows: \$10,000 for LDC and SIDS Members, \$25,000 for Developing Countries, and \$50,000 for Developed Countries. He further informed the assembly that, as of now, the ISA Secretariat has received contributions only from the Republic of India, The United States of America, The French Republic, The Federal Republic of Germany, and The Kingdom of Denmark. He earnestly urged all members to contribute to support ISA in its mission of providing valuable services to its Member Countries.
69. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' query regarding Regulatory Frameworks, DG, ISA explained that each country has its unique context and regulatory history. He introduced the Legal Team at the ISA Secretariat, emphasizing their ongoing efforts in this area. He committed that ISA would continue collaborating with countries to provide customized regulatory support tailored to each country's specific needs. He stressed the importance of strong regulatory structures and mechanisms, highlighting their role in enhancing investor confidence. He also added the current subsidy regimes in respective countries needs to be reviewed and structured to enable private sector participation as well.
70. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' observations on Training and Capacity Building, DG, ISA emphasized the paramount importance of this objective. He stressed the need for Training and Capacity Building efforts to align with Solar Roadmaps, ensuring the acquisition of skills tailored to specific areas of importance for each country. He reiterated ISA's commitment to assisting Member Countries in building Solar Roadmaps, ensuring that the right skills are developed for the right jobs. He also informed the Committee through the ISA Secretariat that 60 candidates from the West African Power Pool had been trained in-person and that the rest have been virtual trainings.
71. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Uganda emphasized the significance of ISA Strategic Pillar no. 3 – Analytics and Advocacy Support. He noted that Africa has traditionally been a consumer of technology and solutions, but it is now time for the continent to become a producer and provider. He stressed the importance of knowledge creation and research within Africa and requested support from the ISA Secretariat for technology transfer and the development of African solutions to reduce tariffs and costs.
72. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire sought information regarding the recruitment of staff at the ISA Secretariat. He specifically inquired about the representation of French-speaking countries among the twenty-one staff members reported to have been recruited as recorded in the proceedings of the last Assembly.
73. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire expressed gratitude to everyone and congratulated the ISA Secretariat for convening the meeting. He requested support from the ISA Secretariat regarding technical assistance and the application process for the same. Additionally, he emphasized the need for solar technology to be tailored to the African context, with technologies

capable of performing in the diverse terrains and challenges of the African continent. He proposed that the ISA Secretariat conduct a joint study to assist in building these context-specific solutions.

74. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' observations on ISA Strategic Pillar no. 3 – Analytics and Advocacy Support and their request for Technical Assistance, DG, ISA expressed full support and cooperation from the ISA Secretariat for conducting studies. Drawing from personal experience, he emphasized the importance of research being relevant and addressing the challenges and needs of Africa. While acknowledging the projected increase in demand for solar panels to three to eight times the current demand, he explained that the economics of solar cell manufacturing pose a challenge. Due to the presence of a few large players in the global market, new manufacturing capacity struggles to be cost-competitive.
75. He further opined that while there may be limited opportunities for employment creation in the solar cell manufacturing industry, there is promising potential in setting up capacities for solar module manufacturing. He agreed that this endeavour would also require policy support and scoping studies to better understand the economic possibilities.
76. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' query regarding the representation of French-speaking candidates for recruitment as ISA Staff, DG, ISA informed the Committee that the ISA Secretariat has received three applications from French Speakers, out of which one has been successfully recruited. He reiterated the commitment of ISA to attract the right talent and highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance awareness through advertisements in French-speaking nations as well.
77. The Chair thanked the Hon'ble representatives from various countries for their interventions and the DG, ISA for his remarks.
78. With no further interventions proposed, the Chair proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 5. The ISA STAR-C Initiative

79. The Chair introduced the agenda item concerning the ISA STAR-C Initiative, emphasizing its importance in facilitating technology transfer and capacity-building in solar energy among Member countries. The initiative aims to be a hub for research, development, and dissemination of solar technologies, fostering collaborations with various stakeholders. Capacity-building and research efforts are central to its mission.
80. The Chair highlighted that details about the STAR-C Initiative were provided in the Working Document **ISA/RCA.05/WD.05**.
81. DG, ISA informed the Committee that the ISA Secretariat has been implementing capacity building in countries where roadmaps are established. The focus is on areas identified in these roadmaps, particularly through the STAR Centres. He requested the ISA Secretariat was requested to provide an overview of capacity building initiatives in general, with a specific focus on the STAR Centres.

82. The Chair requested the ISA Secretariat to provide an update on the STAR-C Initiative's progress.
83. The ISA Secretariat delivered a detailed presentation providing an update on the STAR-C Initiative.
84. The Chair acknowledged the popularity of the STAR-C initiative and invited comments and interventions from participants on the Agenda Item.
85. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Uganda proposed the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for solar development in Africa. He emphasized the importance of equipping the STAR Centres and developing human resources. This comprehensive approach, including research and incubation facilities, was deemed crucial. The representative highlighted the need for Africa to focus on incubation, ensuring that technologies from outside are adapted to local situations. He congratulated the ISA Secretariat for their efforts and stressed the importance of collaborative work in this regard.
86. The Hon'ble representative from the Togolese Republic requested the ISA secretariat a clarification on the criteria for selecting countries for the pilot phase of the STAR Centres. He sought clarification on the basis for the selection of these countries.
87. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Niger expressed gratitude to the government of Rwanda for the warm welcome and appreciated the work done by the ISA Secretariat in presenting the document. He informed the committee that Niger Republic has completed its formal expression of interest documents for the STAR Centres. He mentioned that these documents will be sent to the ISA Secretariat in the coming days. He thanked everyone for their participation in the fifth Regional Committee meeting.
88. The Hon'ble representative from the United Republic of Tanzania congratulated the ISA Secretariat for the initiative. He recommended that this initiative, which promotes solar technology, should not just be a request but a strategic plan of the ISA. He suggested that over time, there should be a plan to ensure that all member countries have access to these STAR Centres for developing, maintaining projects, and advancing technology.
89. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia expressed gratitude for ISA' contribution to Ethiopia. He highlighted Africa's vast solar potential but noted challenges in harnessing and storing solar energy. He emphasized the need for research and capacity building, especially in storage systems for renewable energies. He mentioned that a STAR Centre has been established at Addis Ababa University, one of Ethiopia's largest and oldest universities. Innovations have begun, and the necessary equipment is in the process of being shipped. He anticipated that training activities would commence within the next three months.
90. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Benin informed the Committee about the establishment of a STAR Centre in Benin, and that the necessary processes and MOU are underway.

However, a concern was raised regarding the duration specified in the MOU. Specifically, they sought clarity on whether the initiative would be renewable yearly or every two years.

91. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Djibouti noted that some countries have already implemented this initiative and have a STAR Centre operational, which will be beneficial for Djibouti's human resource involved in solar technology. The proposal put forth was for countries currently in the process of implementing STAR Centres to have the opportunity to participate and utilize the operational centres that are already in place which would be a helpful measure to ensure that staff from all countries can reach the same level of proficiency.
92. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Madagascar expressed agreement with The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Djibouti. He proposed creating a regional pool utilizing the existing STAR Centres and expanding this pool in the future to cover specific regions. This approach, in his opinion would expedite the training process.
93. Additionally, He emphasized the importance of good governance, suggesting the inclusion of civil society in the list of actors to be trained. He also informed the Committee that Madagascar has initiated the process and sought clarification on the procedure for the implementation.
94. The Hon'ble representative from Burkina Faso expressed the need for clarification regarding the operation of the STAR Centres. They inquired whether these centres would function on a regional basis or if each country would have its own Star-C. Additionally, they sought information about the geographical locations of these centres.
95. He emphasised the importance of specialization in the training provided by these centres to avoid duplicating existing training programs. They questioned whether there was a well-defined program for the STAR Centres, specifically tailored to the diverse needs of individual countries, considering the variations in education and training requirements from one country to another.
96. The chair invited the ISA Secretariat to respond to the interventions made by the Hon'ble representatives of Member Countries.
97. The KMID Team on behalf of the ISA Secretariat responded as follows.
98. In response to the intervention by the Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Uganda the ISA Secretariat thanked him for his comments.
99. In response to the intervention by the Hon'ble representative from the Togolese Republic the ISA Secretariat explained that the selection criteria for the STAR Centres are determined by the interests expressed by different countries. They mentioned that the ISA Secretariat has been presenting on STAR-C since last year, and as and when they receive interest from various countries, they are proceeding with the necessary formalities to establish the Centre.

100. In response to the intervention by the Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Niger the ISA Secretariat conveyed their eagerness to finalising the MoU at the earliest.
101. In response to the intervention by the Hon'ble representative from the United Republic of Tanzania the ISA Secretariat expressed agreement that all member countries should have STAR Centres. They mentioned that these centres are being created in different phases. By 2023, the aim is to have five centres, followed by ten in 2024, and thirty by 2026.
102. In response to the intervention by the Hon'ble representative from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia the ISA Secretariat emphasized that storage is a top priority for them. They mentioned their ongoing work in the program and their intention to focus on capacity building. The ISA Secretariat additionally stated that this priority would be maintained for Ethiopia's STAR Centres and other willing STAR Centres as well.
103. In response to the intervention by the Hon'ble representative from Republic of Benin the ISA Secretariat clarified that the support period is a maximum of two years. They explained that they provide support for one year initially, as stated in the MoU. If the country requires a second year, they would be happy to support that as well.
104. In response to the interventions by the Hon'ble representatives from Republic of Djibouti and the Republic of Malawi the ISA Secretariat conveyed that countries are encouraged to utilize other STAR Centres. The ISA Secretariat highlighted that these centres have specific specializations such as training, incubation, or testing. Depending on the expertise required, countries are encouraged to make use of the expertise available in the centres in their region.
105. In response to the interventions by the Hon'ble representative from Republic of Madagascar the ISA Secretariat committed to guide them throughout the process and discuss at length the steps involved in the creation of a STAR Centre. The ISA Secretariat informed the Committee that they already have had a meeting with the Republic of Madagascar. If further clarity is needed, the ISA secretariat welcomed discussions on the side-lines of the Regional Committee Meeting.
106. In response to the interventions by the Hon'ble representative from Burkina Faso the ISA Secretariat stated that it would be a national centre with most member countries having their own national centres. Additionally, there would be some regional centres, particularly in countries with small populations like those in the Pacific. These regional centres would be accessible to various countries. In terms of functions, different countries would prioritize different areas where one centre in a region might focus on training, and the regional centre could facilitate knowledge exchange among the centres as well.
107. DG, ISA expanding further explained that diverse countries have varying needs. Therefore, a regional centre would be effective if it operated within a region where the needs were similar. Each centre would be provided with initial curricula, but it was anticipated that over time, the curriculum would evolve to meet the specific needs of each country.

108. The Chair thanked the ISA Secretariat and the DG, ISA for their remarks.
109. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Guinea expressed the need for a clear procedure, particularly for West Africa, regarding the existing centres of excellence supported by WAPP. These centres were already training individuals with various skill levels in areas like data training and solar technology. The speaker sought clarification on whether graduates from technical schools or professionals already employed in utility companies would attend the STAR-C training centres. Additionally, there were existing staff members in electricity companies working on renewable energies, and the speaker inquired about integrating their expertise into the market.
110. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Republic of Nigeria inquired about the criteria for selecting the geographic location of the STAR-Centres. Additionally, they suggested utilizing well-established training institutes, such as the one mentioned in Guinea, rather than building new institutions. The query centred on the possibility of equipping existing facilities for the intended purpose.
111. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' interventions the DG ISA explained that the criteria for establishing STAR-C centres is primarily based on the country's willingness to have one. For example, in Guinea or the West African power pool countries where existing institutions are available, there might not be a need for an additional centre, as STAR-C aims to create capacity where none currently exists.
112. Therefore, the essential requirement is an expression of interest (EOI) from the country. Whether the country decides to build the centre in a specific location, like Nigeria, or elsewhere, it's at the country's discretion to present their case.
113. The Chair asked the ISA Secretariat to make a note of the same while expressing gratitude to the Hon'ble representatives from different countries for their contributions. He also thanked the ISA Secretariat and the Director General, ISA for their comments.
114. With no further interventions proposed, the Chair thanked the ISA Secretariat and proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 6. The ISA SolarX Startup Challenge

115. The Chair introduced the agenda item on the ISA SolarX Startup Challenge and mentioned that the Working Document ISA/RCA.05/WD.06, containing an update on the challenge, was distributed to all Committee members by the ISA Secretariat.
116. The Chair explained that the SolarX Startup Challenge is a global initiative designed to promote solar energy deployment through innovation, collaboration, and partnerships. The initiative aims to harness creative solutions to drive the development and implementation of solar technologies for a

more sustainable future. Notably, the challenge garnered the participation of more than 100 start-ups operating in the African solar energy sector, resulting in the announcement of twenty winners at the G20 Summit event in Goa, India.

117. The Chair then requested the ISA Secretariat to provide the Regional Committee with a briefing on the SolarX Startup Challenge.
118. DG, ISA on behalf of the ISA Secretariat delivered a detailed presentation on the ISA SolarX Startup Challenge.
119. He provided an overview of the SolarX Startup Challenge, which was approved during the previous year's Assembly and focused on Africa for its initial challenge. The initiative was launched at a conference in Egypt, following which a call for applications was issued in December with a deadline in March. To encourage African-based start-ups to participate, four programs were conducted across Africa.
120. He emphasized the importance of fostering more African organizations to develop solar projects, as a significant number of developers were from other parts of the world. The call for proposals covered ten areas, with up to two start-ups to be selected in each category. Out of 180 applications received, 20 winners were announced in July. He informed the Committee that these start-up's will undergo a bootstrapping camp to enhance their capacity to attract financing, establish technological partnerships, and build their brand presence.
121. DG, ISA highlighted the challenges in selecting the winners and announced the winning start-ups from various countries in different categories. He mentioned that the upcoming accelerator workshops would focus on finance raising and brand image creation, among other key areas. These initiatives aim to equip the selected companies with the expertise needed to make significant contributions to the continent and beyond.
122. He also outlined plans to expand the SolarX Startup Challenge to other regions, seeking approval for similar programs in the Asia Pacific region in the coming year and Latin America and the Caribbean region the following year. He explained that this rotation would help create demand across all regions for resources and the supply of solar electricity.
123. The Chair invited comments and interventions from participants on the Agenda Item.
124. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Uganda sought clarification from DG, ISA on what exactly he meant when he invited the Committee to give that the winners of the SolarX Startup Challenge a '*Foot Stomping Reception*'.
125. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' request for clarification DG, ISA explained that he would want that the winners of the SolarX Start-up Challenge to be encouraged and appreciated with a unanimous, loud, and resounding appreciation by all.

126. With no further interventions proposed, the Chair thanked DG, ISA and the ISA Secretariat and proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 7. The ISA Global Solar Facility

127. The Chair introduced the next agenda item, which is an update on the ISA Global Solar Facility. The Chair noted that the Working Document **ISA/RAC.05/WD.07**, containing information and updates about the Global Solar Facility, had been distributed to all members of the Regional Committee by the ISA Secretariat.
128. The Chair explained that the ISA Global Solar Facility is an initiative aimed at addressing the financial challenges faced by ISA Member countries when deploying solar energy projects. It seeks to provide affordable and accessible financing options to empower countries to embrace solar energy for sustainable development. Initially focused on the African region, the facility's goal is to attract private capital to underserved markets in Africa by offering risk mitigation support through financing instruments such as payment guarantees and insurance. The facility comprises three funds: the payment guarantees fund, the insurance fund, and the investment fund. Projects in Africa can utilize these funds to purchase payment guarantees or partial insurance premiums.
129. The Chair then invited the ISA Secretariat to brief the Regional Committee on the progress made in operationalizing the Global Solar Facility.
130. The DG, ISA on behalf of the ISA Secretariat delivered a detailed presentation on the ISA Global Solar Facility.
131. DG, ISA presented the Global Solar Facility, approved at the previous Assembly, focused on creating investor confidence in developing countries, starting with Africa. The facility consists of three funds: the solar payment guarantees fund, solar insurance fund, and the solar investment fund.
132. The solar payment guarantee fund ensures investor confidence by guaranteeing returns even in case of delayed developer payments. The solar insurance fund, in partnership with Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), supports viable projects by subsidizing insurance payments.
133. The solar investment fund, funded by low-cost capital from developed world banks, attracts private investments at lower interest rates.
134. Projects under the Global Solar Facility are would also include small-scale solar applications including solar pumps, rooftops, health facilities, and cooling storages. Initial funding includes a \$25 million grant from India and in-principal pledges to a total about \$50 million from other donors. Once funding reaches \$40 million, tenders will be called for an Africa-based investment manager to oversee the facility.

135. The facility's structure involves a parent company and regional funds within it. A global steering committee, comprising donors, oversees the parent company. An executive board, led by the Director General of ISA and the CEO of the Global Solar Facility, manages day-to-day functions. The facility anticipates a leverage of around seven, enabling an investment of approximately \$1,400 million in solar projects.
136. Location options for the facility and its funds include Luxembourg, Netherlands, Mauritius, Singapore, and GIFT city in India, depending on favourable tax benefits. The facility aims to finalize its structure, location, and staff recruitment by October 2024.
137. DG, ISA urged countries to contribute, even small amounts, to support the fund's launch, emphasizing their role as owners and steering committee members. He invited comments on the plan and its implementation.
138. The Chair invited brief comments and interventions from participants on the Agenda Item.
139. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Uganda congratulated the Director General on securing the anchor fund of \$25 million from India and the additional \$15 million pledged by other contributors. He acknowledged the point raised by the Honourable Minister of Rwanda about member country contributions. Referring to Uganda's success with a similar facility funded by the World Bank, the representative suggested considering member country contributions in this forum.
140. They explained that Uganda had allocated funds to various international organizations like IRENA from its budget for international bodies. They believed that if this initiative was officially communicated, it could garner support back home. The representative emphasized the potential success of the facility, particularly in addressing the purchasing power challenges of rural communities and encouraged other countries to contribute to this fund.
141. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Djibouti expressed gratitude to the Director General, ISA for the Global Solar Facility initiative, highlighting its importance in facilitating diverse investments in Africa by preparing bankable projects and providing necessary guarantees. He acknowledged existing partnerships with entities like MIGA, World Bank, African Development Bank, and European Investment Bank, pointing out the potential challenges of efficiency and procedural delays within the ISA's role.
142. The representative raised concerns about the choice between direct country-investor discussions and involving ISA as an intermediary while emphasising the need for open discussions among African countries present in the room, suggesting contributions to expedite the facility's operations and to facilitate transparent discussions about various projects and procedures.
143. In conclusion, they emphasized that such initiatives would strengthen the organization, providing it with additional leverage and enhancing its dynamism, competence, and international standing.

144. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' request for clarification DG, ISA thanked the Minister for their concerns and acknowledged the challenges related to existing relationships between member countries and other financial entities. He highlighted two key points currently under discussion.
145. Firstly, he emphasized that the Global Solar Facility has its own decision-making mechanism independent of the development banks, which ensures faster processing. The investment manager overseeing the facility is from the private sector and is accustomed to swift decision-making processes. The Director General cited the example of Mega, which has efficiently executed projects in the past six months, demonstrating its rapid response to opportunities.
146. Secondly, he stressed the importance of resource availability and suggested that those interested in utilizing the facility should pay a premium. He emphasized that investors should not receive guarantees without contributing, ensuring a sense of value for their investments. The Director General proposed the creation of a facility where investors actively participate, enhancing the value of their investments. He believed that once investors experienced the benefits of active involvement, the flow of funds would naturally follow. The Director General encouraged open discussion to refine these points and facilitate the smooth functioning of the facility.
147. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Gambia expressed gratitude to the ISA for organizing the meeting and extended appreciation to the Government of Rwanda for hosting the event and their warm hospitality.
148. Regarding member contributions to the Alliance for the Global Solar Facility, the representative proposed a formalized process. In his view, it should not merely be recorded in reports but taken further. She suggested that a letter should be written to member countries through their respective embassies in India, with copies going to the Foreign Minister. This communication would then be forwarded to the ministries of energy, subsequently reaching the cabinet for discussion. Following cabinet deliberations, the matter would proceed to the National Assembly for approval. This approach, she believed, would ensure member countries' contributions to the initiative.
149. With no further interventions proposed, the Chair thanked DG, ISA and the ISA Secretariat and proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 8. The ISA Private Sector Engagement Strategy

150. The Chair introduced the next agenda item, update on the ISA private sector engagement strategy. The Chair informed the Committee that the Working Document **ISA/RAC.05/WD.08**, containing details about the strategy's progress, had been distributed to all members of the Regional Committee by the ISA Secretariat.
151. The Chair emphasized the significant role that the private sector plays in promoting the adoption of solar energy solutions. To achieve global energy transition goals and Net Zero targets, it is crucial to encourage increased private sector investments, particularly in developing countries. The Chair

highlighted that the Fifth Session of the ISA Assembly had approved the Private Sector Engagement Strategy, aiming to accelerate the growth of the solar industry across all ISA Member Countries.

152. The Chair then requested the ISA Secretariat to provide the Committee with a briefing on the progress achieved in advancing the private sector engagement strategy.
153. The DG, ISA stated that by implementing efficient strategies to engage the private sector, new possibilities could be unlocked, investments attracted, and the global deployment of solar energy expedited. DG, ISA encouraged collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors to create a sustainable future.
154. The ISA Secretariat delivered a detailed presentation on the ISA private sector engagement strategy.
155. The Chair invited comments and interventions from participants on the Agenda Item.
156. The Hon'ble representative from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia expressed gratitude for the concise overview of the private sector engagement strategy. He elaborated on the progress made, highlighting specific steps taken to enhance private sector involvement in the energy sector. He acknowledged Ethiopia's limited energy capacity and the slow progress in generation due to governmental monopoly in power generation, transmission, and distribution. To address this issue, Ethiopia revised its energy policy, opening avenues for private sector participation across the entire energy process.
157. Furthermore, Ethiopia established a public-private partnership program and revised its investment policy, creating a conducive environment for private sector engagement not only in the energy sector but also in overall development activities. They emphasized their efforts to encourage solar manufacturing and assembly, aiming to expand the scope of private sector involvement.
158. The Hon'ble representative from Burkina Faso expressed gratitude for the presentation by the ISA Secretariat. They noted that the strategy seemed to focus on production and transmission without a specific mention of private sector involvement in these aspects. He requested further elaboration on how the private sector could be engaged in the production, transmission, and distribution of energy to the population.
159. In response to the Hon'ble representatives' request for clarification DG, ISA explained that the Corporate Advisory Group consists of three components. The first involves developers who handle energy production, the second involves manufacturers responsible for solar module production, and the third comprises financiers who invest in these initiatives. However, he clarified that the efforts do not extend to transmission or distribution aspects.
160. The Chair proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 9. Preparations for the Sixth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region

161. The Chair introduced the next agenda item, which pertains to preparations for the Sixth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region. The Chair highlighted the significance of Regional Committee Meetings as a crucial platform for countries to align their sustainable development goals, especially concerning the clean energy transition.
162. The Chair made a request to the Hon'ble Members of the Regional Committee, seeking their support for the ISA Secretariat in hosting future Regional Committee Meetings. The Chair emphasized that such support would underscore their commitment to combating climate change through the promotion of clean energy.
163. The Chair concluded by inviting Hon'ble Members to share their comments on hosting the Sixth Meeting of the ISA Regional Committee for the Africa Region in August in 2024.
164. The Hon'ble representative from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire expressed gratitude towards the Republic of Rwanda for hosting the event and acknowledged the significant progress made under the International Solar Alliance (ISA). He shared that they have received approval from the Minister of Mines and Energy and proposed that the next assembly be held in Côte d'Ivoire.
165. The Chair acknowledged the initiative taken by the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to host the next session of the ISA Assembly. He then proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 10. Interventions by Member Countries

166. The Chair acknowledged that most of the comments and interventions have been received from the Member Countries during the proceedings of this Regional Committee.
167. He requested that if there are no further interventions forthcoming, He would proceed to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 11. Any other business

168. The Chair invited the Hon'ble Members to raise any other matter of urgent importance for the consideration of the Committee or the General Assembly of the ISA.
169. With no interventions forthcoming the Chair proceeded to address the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 12. Closing of the Meeting

170. The Chair extended congratulations to the ISA Secretariat on behalf of the Members of the Regional Committee for the Africa Region. They appreciated the Secretariat's efforts in facilitating effective regional engagement and looked forward to the continued advancement of these mechanisms.

Gratitude was expressed to the National Focal Points from the Africa Region for their collaboration with the ISA Secretariat on significant initiatives and for facilitating the meeting.

171. The Chair noted that the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Committee of the Africa Region had been highly productive. Comprehensive discussions were held on various ISA initiatives with immense potential in shaping the future of the global solar energy sector. They sincerely thanked all the Hon'ble Members of the Regional Committee, representatives of the ISA Partner Organizations, and special invitees for their participation and contributions.
172. He emphasized the role of the ISA in Africa as a testament to the power of international collaboration and a vital step towards sustainable development. They highlighted the ISA's commitment to catalysing the clean energy transition across the region by deploying solar energy solutions. The ISA's nine comprehensive programs covering sectors such as agriculture, health, transportation, storage, and clean hydrogen were mentioned, all aimed at maximizing the potential of solar power. Various initiatives introduced by the ISA to advance its mission were also acknowledged.
173. The DG, ISA thanked the Chair for the conduct of the meeting.
174. The Fifth Meeting of the Regional Committee of the Africa Region was declared closed.
