Minutes of the Meetings 01 September 2024 – 08 September 2024
Alexandria, Egypt

GA Meeting 1

Welcome and apologies

Ben welcomed everyone and thanked the IOI 2024 hosts, Eslam Wageed in particular. He announced three new IOI member countries: Rwanda in Alexandria as an Invited Observer and Algeria and Pakistan present with contestants. Ben also welcomed Albania back to the IOI community with contestants participating this year. Additionally, it was noted that the United Arab Emirates and Qatar intended to register as paying guest. (In the end, a representative from Qatar was unable to attend.)

Ben acknowledged the significant contributions of Iran to IOI 2024 including Ali Sharifi the Chair of ISC and four Iranian members of HSC. He expressed regret that they were unable to obtain the visas needed to attend IOI 2024.

The members of the International Committee (IC), International Scientific Committee (ISC) and International Technical Committee (ITC) were introduced and asked to stand.

Finally, Ben asked everyone to think of topics for group discussions and submit them to himself or J.P. Pretti, the Secretary of the IOI, by GA 4.

Introduction of GA Chair

Mohamed Taha was introduced as the Chair of the GA for IOI 2024. Ben was thrilled to say Mohamed has lots of IOI experience having participated as a contestant, deputy leader, leader, member of ISC and significant contributor to the organization of IOI 2008.

Presentation and confirmation of GA Agenda

The agenda previously circulated by email and on Matrix was approved without any abstentions or votes against.

Approval of contest rules and procedures

Jakub Łącki (HSC) outlined the new structure of IOI contest rules split into the rules themselves, competition equipment details and grading environment information. He also outlined a simplification to task-related questions with the merging of answers into "No comment/Please refer to task statement". He described how calling a grader function with invalid parameters will no longer be considered a protocol violation but instead will be reported as incorrect output because of an invalid argument. Jakub said that the other two identified cases for incorrect output are when a grader function is called too many times and when an invalid value is returned. He noted that if several of these output mistakes occur, then no specifics are communicated. On the other hand, he responded to a question to say that if there are two different categories of mistakes, then only one will be reported. Estonia asked if this information will be available to contestants during the contest. Jakub said that it is part of the grading documentation that he does not think will be available, but he will attempt to change this.

Jakub emphasized that command line submission is not just an alternative but a "first class citizen".

The GA was informed of a tiny change to compilation flags with the goal of supplying additional debugging information to be more helpful to students.

Jakub reminded everyone that if a contestant needs extra time, they should report it as soon as possible.

Related to this, he said that at the end of the competition, everyone should remain seated and quiet. Furthermore, he said the contestants may be asked to stay for less than ten minutes after which they should leave the contest tent in silence.

Finally, before taking questions, Jakub gave the appeals procedure and deadlines.

In response to a question from Jhonatan Castro (IC), Jakub said no appeal is needed if there is a major problem with the CMS.

In response to Bulgaria, Jakub said contestants are not told how many submissions they have made for a task but that it is very rare for the limit to be reached.

Belgium expressed concern that the inability to share questions before the contest is over renders a meaningful livestream impossible and makes it more difficult to build engagement at home. Jakub acknowledged that this is tricky especially because the existence of nine remote contestants this year raises security questions.

It was confirmed for Lithuania that C++20 is allowed.

The contest rules and procedures were then approved with no abstentions or votes against.

Call for nominations

J.P. reminded everyone of the deadlines for one opening on each of IC, ISC and ITC. He noted that a person may be nominated for both President and IC and reminded people that if a current member of IC is elected President, then a second shorter-term position on IC would also be up for election.

IOI 2027 and IOI 2028 hosts

Ben said he is now annually giving a doomsday message, and we need bids from potential future hosts. He did say that bids for IOI 2027 would be discussed this week, but he asked anyone interested in bidding for IOI 2028 or IOI 2029 to talk to IC this week because we do not have bids for either of those years.

Vote on fast-track regulations changes

Eduard Kalinicenko (IC) reminded everyone that regulation changes approved by IC were sent to the mailing list one month ago in line with regulation S7.4 and with the intention of immediately voting on changes:

Unifying voting threshold across IOI Regulations - Changes in A3.2, S7.2
IOI Regulations split into Statutes, Explications, Appendices and Code of Conduct is largely academic, and open to debate; but it can currently have real implications when it comes to vote thresholds. Although a lot of votes in the GA do have a simple majority threshold, most of them end up with a much stricter majority. Given the GA feedback, IC is proposing to eliminate practical differences between Statutes, Explications, Appendices and Code of Conduct and have any changes or overrides to Regulations require a 2/3 majority vote at GA.

Notice period for votes - Changes in N3.1, A3.2, N3.2.3
With respect to the GA being given 24 hours' notice of any upcoming votes, IC believes there is value in such a rule. However, the value of the GA being able to make decisions where this rule cannot be kept (for example, an issue arose in the last 24 hours) is also great. As such, IC is proposing a balance, where votes for a motion may be exempt from 24-hour notice as long as 2/3 of the voting members at IOI'n support it. This is stricter than a 2/3 majority – GA quorum is only a third of voting members, and as such IC has deemed that a 2/3 majority would be an insufficient threshold for a 24-hour notice exemption.

Slovenia asked how it is determined when changes do or do not override regulations. Eduard acknowledged the concern and noted the coming motion from IC (not being fast-tracked) to say the President ultimately makes this decision.

Türkiye asked why these changes are being proposed now. Ben said that the regulations are an old, antiquated document that do not match reality. He said every year something comes up which is not the way regulations operate, and we are patching this hole.

North Macedonia asked why we need to do this so quickly and why we can't do this at GA 7. Eduard said this is because we want to avoid the same situation as last year. North Macedonia then spoke to concern about raising the bar to a 2/3 majority because it takes power away from GA. Ben responded to say that we have some difficult discussions coming and we often get bogged down in thresholds, so this is an attempt to set expectations now. That is, he said IC is trying to set the rules of the game before any votes take place. North Macedonia countered that difficult discussions happened in the past so it is not necessary now and we can get through them again.

In response to concerns that votes could be held twice on motions and that all proposals could be fast-tracked, Ben said there is a technical answer and a philosophical answer. He said, technically, the 24-hour rule helps and philosophically, we are trying to give as much notice as we can but sometimes logistics make it impossible. Türkiye followed up to say that in general, fast-tracking is not great; some people here who are new and also, they are concerned that the push for a 2/3 majority is because of the upcoming vote on possibly sanctioning Israel. Ben answered that this is not specifically about Israel, and it is partly about the votes that we don't know are coming. For example, last year, he said the GA deemed one

issue significant enough to require substantial support (a 2/3 majority) even though this might not have been technically required. He emphasized that many issues are unforeseen. He countered North Macedonia's claim stating that this 2/3 rule is giving the GA more power because a super-majority is required.

A vote was taken on the fast-track regulations. They passed with over 60 votes for, 5 against and 15 abstentions.

Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of IOI 2023 were approved with one abstention and no votes against.

Secretary's report

J.P. gave his report outlining his regular business and highlighting that membership inquiries were received from Botswana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Nepal, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Code of Conduct reminder

The GA was reminded of the Code of Conduct and that we do not tolerate harassment, abuse or bullying. He reminded everyone that these are not just theoretical concerns because there have been instances in the past. Leaders were reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure their contestants have read and understood it.

IOI Ally Program

Ben reminded everyone of the IOI Ally Program and said the list of allies for IOI 2024 is on the IOI website.

GA Meeting 2

Issues arising from the Practice Session

Michal Forišek (ISC) provided a debrief on the Practice Session. He provided the following information:

- As usual, in general things went well. This means there were some minor hiccups but no major ones. The session started on time even though not everyone was there on time because of long lines for breakfast.
- One of the big organizational issues involved approving materials. If anything is rejected, this should be communicated by dinner and there will be a chance of resubmission.
- There is one change – contestants may bring food, drinks and earplugs to the competition. All other things must be submitted no later than the start of the translation session.
- Provided snacks will include bananas, pastries with chocolate, juice and water.
- There are no cards this year to get the attention of proctors and make requests. The committees wish there were and will aim for this in future years, but they cannot be made in time for this year. Scrap paper can be waved instead.

Martin Mareš (ITC) outlined small technical issues that arose during the practice session:

- Automatic login was not distributed to all machines. This has already been fixed.
- Some contestants were sitting at the wrong place. Hopefully this has been sorted out.
- Firefox was crashing for one contestant. The issue was the machine. The contestant was relocated, and this only took two minutes.
- An issue was reported with the `-fsanitize` option to gcc. It turned out it to be a bug in gcc and was disabled. Disabling a related feature resolved the problem on the machines (which was already the case in the CMS).
- An obsolete manual from a previous IOI was distributed to machines which will be removed.
- A current copy of the rules (on the website) will be placed on each machine.
- One delegation reported that `ioisubmit` was not working after contest was over. This was a bug in the subnetwork that was fixed.
- There were a few issues with the remote contestants. They were unable to access the system because of a last-minute security change. It was resolved but it took 80 minutes. Then some remote contestants were still unable to login because of the way the VPN operated. Attempts to fix this did not work but finally at the end of the session, ITC implemented a feature to fix the problem.
- There were no local submissions using `ioisubmit` because all CMS submissions were successfully received.

- There were some very large latency issues with using washrooms. The hosts said they will fix this.

In response to questions, Michal and Martin stated:
- Two contestants have medical devices that require monitoring by phone during the contest. Local volunteers will mediate this.
- It is generally helpful for contestants to suggest an amount of extra time when requesting this.
- Hats are considered clothing and can be worn.
- The host will be asked to remove cats from the contestant hall because of contestants with allergies.
- Leaders will not be able to watch contestants in the hall to assess their psychological state. The most that can be suggested is to watch rankings and submissions via the scoreboard.
- Whether or not there will be a public scoreboard is still being discussed.
- The intention is for the air conditioning to remain on constantly. An outage caused it to go off and back on again during the practice contest. If contestants are very uncomfortable because of air conditioning blowing on them, it should be possible to adjust the airflow upwards and away from the contest floor. Limited requests to be moved to spare machines can also be entertained.
- The message about auto back-up not working is part of outdated material and can be ignored.
- Extra time can be requested using the CMS or raising a hand but using the CMS is preferred.
- Command histories and home directories will be cleared before the competition begins.
- All local and grader machines are configured the same way so any performance differences will be investigated but no machine changes are possible at this point.
- There are no plans to use fogging machines or other mosquito deterrents.
- C++17 is considered the standard and the provision of C++20 is a bonus so there are no plans to provide C++20 specific documentation.
- To mitigate risk, there will only be one soft copy of the tasks.
- Students may request and be given two waters at once but wait times will be less during the actual contest than the practice contest.

In response to questions about the suitability of the GA room for translation night, Eslam apologized and said no alternate locations are available. This meant some people would need to work on their laps or move around the building. Eslam did say he would bring extension cords for leaders to help people spread out.

With regards to the long breakfast lines causing delays, Eslam said volunteers will eat later on competition days and leaders are encouraged to tell their contestants to show up for breakfast early and eat quickly.

Eslam acknowledged that some guests/adjuncts need help with transportation, and he will arrange to transport them back to their hotels once translation is complete.

GA Meeting 3

Call for proposals for Group Discussions

Ben said that the IOI Conference is scheduled during Day 1 of the competition and on Day 2 we will have group discussions. He reminded the GA that these are not formal meetings but instead an opportunity to throw out suggestions and discuss them. He likened them to a cooking pot for ideas citing examples of past topics (honourable mentions and gender diversity) and requesting that topic ideas be submitting by the following night.

Appointment of scrutineers for voting during GA meetings

Greg Lee, Seiichi Tani and Richard Forster were approved as scrutineers for IOI 2024.

Presentation of other regulation changes

After previously sending the details by e-mail, Eduard summarized the (non-fast-track) regulation updates proposed by IC:

1. *Interpretation of the Regulations (E1.3)*
   In some instances, the Regulations can be open to interpretation. For example: classifying whether a motion seeks to override the Regulations, or whether a motion has major semantic changes.

   We propose: the interpretation lies with the IOI president, but can be overruled by a 2/3 majority of the GA.

2. *Possibility of joint hosts for IOI (S4.1, S4.2, E4.1.2, E4.1.3, S5.4, S5.5, S5.8)*
   IC have received inquiries into the possibility of multiple countries bidding together to host the IOI. Current Regulations appear to prevent that, which this change fixes.

3. *Hosts expectations are applicable to all award winners (S5.10)*
   Last year there was a discussion on whether not awarding a medal at the Closing Ceremony is overriding the Regulations. The lack of the word "all" in this Statute made it ambiguous, so this change addresses this concern.

4. *Regulate timelines for Distinguished Service Awards (E5.11, N5.11)*
   IC has received concerns in multiple years about a missed call for DSA nominations. In practice, timelines for DSA nominations are consistent, and nominations are considered at the "Winter" Meeting that Committees hold in the Host Country, usually around 6 months before IOI (S3.7). These changes ensure that we issue a call for DSA nominations every year and clarify the expected timeline.

5. *Registration Fee Transfer (A5.9)*
   Kim is not a Host Country.

6. *Clarifying "IOI" in Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct)*
   This clarifies that the Code of Conduct applies to everyone involved with IOI (including contestants, leaders, guides, hosts, committees) instead of just "IOI".

7. *Remote contestants & medal boundaries (E6.14)*
   Currently, Regulations mandate that medal boundaries are computed only by using Contestants who are competing on-site in the Host Country.

   Since remote participation is continuing to occur in exceptional cases, and since the technology for remote participation is now well tested, IC would like to eliminate unnecessary distinction between Contestants for the purpose of Awards and Rankings going forward.

Task selection for Competition Day 1

The translation process and outline of the evening was discussed.

Significant Wi-Fi problems eventually resulted in task statements distributed on paper but eventually objections were solicited and received. Minor objections were considered and addressed and there were no major objections. Consequently, the proposed problem set was voted on as a whole. It passed with no votes against and one abstention.

GA Meeting 4

Housekeeping notes

Ben announced that if a contestant has air blowing on them and their papers during Day 2, they should let proctors know because they should be able to redirect the air upwards. He also announced that to avoid a diplomatic incident, there cannot be any flags at the closing ceremony. He indicated this is beyond our and the hosts' control. In response to a question, he said he will try to find out if flags on shirts are okay. At a later meeting he confirmed that flags on clothing are permitted.

Report on Competition Day 1

Jakub described some of the issues encountered on the first day of competition:
- Six submissions caused the grader to crash because the submissions themselves crashed. After the underlying issue was determined (with thanks to Martin!), affected contestants were notified and one of these contestants was given ten minutes of extra time. Then all submissions were rejudged. The problematic submissions ended up with zero points and while the scores of some individual submissions changed, no final scores changed.
- Approximately ten machines were affected by hardware and/or software connectivity issues. These were typically resolved within ten minutes. In two exceptional cases, about ten minutes of extra time was requested and awarded.
- The tasks in the CMS were accidentally ordered to match the order in the translation session. On Day 2, the ordering will be alphabetic so contestants should not infer anything about difficulty level based on the problem order in the CMS.
- Two incorrect flags on the scoreboard were reported and quickly fixed.

- An `ioisubmit` directory issue resulted in the ability of contestants to access their command line submissions made during the practice session. It was determined that the problem was actually independent of `ioisubmit` itself.

Luxembourg asked if contestants could have learned about the `ioisubmit` directory issue at home in advance and thus exploited this. Martin replied to say it was not possible. Michal reiterated this. Türkiye said this was a major security issue and should not be considered minor. Martin said they agree, but there is nothing they can do about it having happened, yet they can ensure it does not happen again. Iceland said a related issue is that papers were not cleared after the practice session. Jakub said he does not have information about this, but he does know efforts were made to remove these papers so perhaps one missed row was missed. He said they will double check and try to be more thorough before Day 2.

Some statistics were presented: 54 total questions were asked, over 8000 submissions were made, the grader latency climbed as high as 97 seconds, the toilet queue rose to as high as 55 minutes, and 370 contestants competed. The committees said they would try to reduce both latencies on Day 2 as well as attempt to prevent chatting with guides on bathroom breaks.

Finally, there was a reminder that contestants should make a request for extra time as soon as possible and keep working while waiting for a decision.

Appeals for Competition Day 1

Jakub announced that there were no appeals.

Martin then sadly said he had to be the bearer of bad news. He said an execution time difference was noted between machines (both contestant and grader machines). He noted it is the result of slightly different memory setups. Luckily, he said that the difference is negligible in the vast majority of cases and at most 20% in the worst case which is not significant except if we have an output only task. He said consultations with ISC indicate that they do not feel this will be an issue with the proposed task set. Leaders were encouraged to bring this up during Day 2 translation session if they disagree and feel the issue will affect one of those tasks. Bulgaria asked if this information is considered confidential. Jakub said it is not.

Singapore asked for the number of contestants used to determine medal boundaries. The response was that it will probably be 353 or 357 and more will be known after Day 2 when it will be known whether the Iranian contestants will compete in person.

Luxembourg said their contestants reported two issues. First, two guides were discussing solutions to problems in earshot and secondly, a contestant said a person was walking through the contest hall taking photos talking and disturbing people. Iceland reported the same complaint adding that one contestant did not get their translations.

Canada said one of their contestants also did not receive their envelope with problem statements. They also said there was a sentence added later during translation that did not appear in at least three translations. They understood that this was probably the result of poor internet and asked for better internet on the second translation night. Jakub agreed with the strong need for reliable internet and reminded people of the availability of `diff` on the translation system.

Norway said one of their contestants complained that a light was flickering.

The United Kingdom followed up on Canada's comments asking if ISC is aware of the specific translations that were missing the line in question and what was being done about it. Michal said they only learned of this in the afternoon and don't have manpower to check all translations. He said that given that translations are made public, they don't think anything was done maliciously and the issue here really was likely poor internet. He continued to say that there are no plans to punish or admonish anyone, but they want to take a lesson from this and try to make it very clear what is the final correct version of English. On the other hand, they also asked all of the GA to pay careful attention to updates.

Finally, there was another complaint (this one from Belgium) about volunteers speaking loudly at the back of the room before the end of the contest.

Response to conflict in Gaza (discussion)

Ben introduced the agenda item on IOI's response to the conflict in Gaza by showing a slide containing options previously outlined by email. He reiterated that this meeting was for discussion and statements of positions with a vote to follow during the last GA meeting. He said that all additional proposals received since the last email have been incorporated into the options:

1. Do nothing. Israel competes as normal.
2. Sanction Israel in the same way as Russia and Belarus. Israel competes under the IOI flag.
3. Sanction Israel by removing them entirely from the IOI. Israel does not compete at all.
4. IOI should not respond to any international conflicts. Do not sanction Israel. Remove sanctions on Russia and Belarus.
5. Sanction Israel and Palestine in the same way as Russia and Belarus. Israel and Palestine compete under the IOI flag.
6. Sanction Israel and Palestine by removing them entirely from the IOI. Israel and Palestine do not compete at all.

Ben reminded everyone that there are two countries who are not in Alexandria – Israel and Iran. He said that naturally Israel in particular asked to be part of this discussion, so they are listening one-way on Zoom because the hosts were unable to provide a better set-up. He noted that this means they are not able to speak directly in response to the discussion, but they will be putting their position on Matrix.

Next, Ben carefully described the four options involving Israel with a table to symbolically summarize the effects of these options. Additionally, he said another question was sent to IC, namely whether Palestine should be treated the same as Israel.

The timeline and voting details were also shown on a slide and explained.

Before turning moderation to the Chair of GA, Ben recalled that IC discussed this prior to IOI 2024 and could not reach a decision. He said that when the matter came to a vote, there was a tie, and so IC is not making a recommendation. Instead, Ben said it is the GA's job to argue for and against the existing options. He asked for questions about what the options mean or on the broad timeline of how this would be handled by the GA, but there were none.

Türkiye had questions for Ben. Since IC had already considered only the first four options, they wanted to know how IC feels about options 5 and 6. Also, they wanted to know how opinions on IC were divided between elected and host country members. Ben answered the first part to say that IC did not consider sanctioning Palestine at all. He said that yesterday, people from the GA asked that options 5 and 6 enter the conversation. That is, he said options 5 and 6 have not "been through the IC". With respect to transparency, Ben said we now have a policy where votes are attached to names by default, but there is an exception where in special circumstances some votes can be made confidential. Ben said this was done for this particular issue. Ben said IC voted for it to be confidential and speaking personally feels it was correct to do so because in the past we have had abstentions from people who were host appointees and thus bound in some sense. Secondly, Ben explained that there an issue of safety. He said at least one IC member has received threatening emails on exactly this issue. He said that what GA members can do is ask IC members privately how they voted. He said he would be happy to say answer this for himself offline.

Palestine asked on what grounds sanctioning them is under consideration. They spoke to the extreme suffering of Palestinians. They said sanctions are being considered on Israel because of war stating that thousands of Israelis are arguing against the war. They also made a distinction between Hamas and Palestinians.

Egypt wanted to add that we should not equate this with the conflict in Ukraine. They argued that Ukraine has an army and what is happening in Palestine is genocide.

Mile Jovanov (North Macedonia) said he opposed sanctions on Russia when a member of IC. He said he is always against punishing kids to make political statements. He acknowledged that for European countries especially, the conflict in Ukraine was very scary and emotional, but talking about issues like this at IOI, which most of us don't understand, is not useful. He pointed to the message Araz Yusubov (IC) sent to everyone in advance of this meeting. Mile said it is shameful that we are discussing this. Even more, he said that we might make a different decision this year than we made two years ago, and this would imply that one conflict/country is more important than another. He said as far as he remembers, Russia and Belarus were not present during that discussion, but Israel is now. He said this is not principled. In summary, Mile said it is not our job to do things like this.

Ben followed up to say that Russia and Belarus did not participate in that discussion because they were already sanctioned. Mile responded to say that was true, but the sanctions were set by IC.

Türkiye said we have a long history and traditions. He said there have been conflicts all along and until two or three years ago, the IOI did not respond to them. They claimed that previously we left critical thinking to contestants but now we have become activists. They questioned why we are punishing kids as opposed to diplomats. They expressed dismay that activism was at a very high level not seen before at IOI. They argued that this is the moment to cut back and option 4 is an honourable retreat, but we should make sure we are fair: similar actions have similar consequences. They said there need to be more columns to address other conflicts and this would eventually lead to every country being sanctioned.

Germany said first that they encourage everyone to be brief. To the matter, they rejected the assertion that anyone here is an activist. They also said they don't feel IC has shown activism, but instead IC has taken fair and considerate actions consistent with other organizations.

Türkiye asked then why IC is not doing same thing as was done with Russia and Belarus.

Fredrik Niemelä (IC) responded to say there are many reasons. He cited the reason that IC membership changed and secondly, another important difference is that last time GA was critiqued for making the decision and asked that these decisions be left to the GA. Türkiye asked where this is worded/stated.

Bolivia said they know this is about Israel and Palestine, but it is no longer time to keep sanctions on Russia and Belarus. They argued that Russia has been a successful and long-time IOI participant.

Ben noted that Israel posted their position on Matrix. The statement was from the organization that funds Israel's IOI team. In it, they explained their perspective of the war in Gaza and plead for the GA to not act in a way that causes their young students to fully represent their country at IOI. Their arguments centred on sanctions being counter to the objectives of the IOI and that other similar international organizations have not chosen to sanction Israel. Israel also argued that even if you feel the IOI should consider sanctions when warranted, the war in Gaza does not meet this standard. They discussed fault, actions of Hamas and misinformation about the conflict. Finally, they described the context Israel finds itself in with many countries denying its right to exist and even the current IOI hosts leaving Israel off a map on the event's website.

Algeria asked about how preferential voting works, partly because they think options 5 and 6 make no sense. Ben explained that for preferential voting, including 5 and 6 does not express support for them. He said listing them last is saying you strongly oppose them, but he did say that because the Schulze method would be executed manually, we could consider any unranked options as tied for last.

Sun Teck Tan (IC) posed a question: After two years of sanctioning Russia and Belarus, have we achieved anything and similarly, will sanctioning Israel accomplish anything? He asked why we are punishing students and wondered if we could do more positive things instead. He said he knows Ukrainian and Palestinian students are suffering and suggested we try to help them instead. He said he strongly supports the fourth option.

Bulgaria asked if the voting system will allow ties that are not in last place. Ben replied with two answers. First, he said that he will try to put all this in the long email after this meeting. Secondly, he pointed out that this is the first time that we will be using Schulze formally and doing so manually so everyone is asked not to have ties other than the special case Algeria raised. Bulgaria followed up asking why we don't use a point system. Ben explained the past choice of going with the Schulze method and observed that its use is now in the regulations.

Fredrik replied to Türkiye to say that he could not find a recording of GA's disapproval of IC's sanctions in 2022. He apologized if he was wrong and perhaps blinded by his own opinion. That said, Fredrik said he can say that he clearly left GA discussions that year with the feeling that many members indicated it was wrong for IC to act on their behalf. Speaking personally, he agreed with Sun Teck saying we should not punish these kids, and the regulations don't allow for sanctioning.

Ben then made a brief statement about the charge of activism. He spoke about 2022 and said he appreciates that this caused division. On the other hand, he said he thinks anything that was done would have caused division, including doing nothing, because a statement would have been made regardless. Ben recalled that IC received many strong unsolicited opinions in support of action. In defense of Fredrik, Ben said he knows for sure that many people expressed anger about IC acting but he acknowledged that it could be that hearing these strong opinions exaggerated the perception of how many people felt that way. Ben recalled that IC discussed this back then for a very long time and now two years later, IC again did not take the decision lightly. Ben said he spoke to many people including one person he respects tremendously who made the claim that IC is in an impossible situation either way; that is, if we sanction Israel we are seen as causing politics, and if we don't, we are accused of not treating the two conflicts equally.

Palestine wanted to thank all their friends for trying to address the suffering in Gaza and that they appreciate the positive discussion and all the support.

Algeria asked about removing the first option because it will essentially be on the table with a ratification vote for whichever option the GA votes for. Ben said IC did discuss this today and normally, we would require a "None of the above" which in this case is the role played by option one. He also reminded everyone that the Schulze method can appropriately handle any number of options.

Slovenia said they feel there is a real issue with the voting system and noted that only the first option meets our regulations. Ben said he hears and understands the concerns and reiterated that the Schulze method really does find the preferred option.

After a bit of back and forth about simple majorities and 2/3 majorities, Eduard read the regulations and said the proposed process matches them exactly.

Egypt said Palestinian children are suffering and we need to send a message by preventing Israel from competing.

Türkiye said they feel the process is biased towards option one and we only need the other five options. They said "do nothing" is not a proposal. Ben responded to say that there are some delegations that prefer option 1, and this gives them a way to express this preference.

Fredrik said a lot of these last comments are on the minutiae of the voting. He said that while we may be able to nitpick here and there, the proposed adjustments will not make a difference. Fredrik and Türkiye proceeded to debate the merits of the Schulze method which Fredrik carefully noted and promised to discuss later. For now, he asked that people first focus on the merits of the options themselves.

Algeria argued that "doing nothing" now would not be just.

Austria said Schulze works best by including all options otherwise it becomes open to manipulation. They urged everyone to continue to focus on the content of the discussion.

Germany agreed with Austria but wondered if option one could be reworded.

Ukraine spoke to say that sanctions do make a difference. They said it is very important that option four is not selected as it would be absolutely unacceptable to them. They said rockets are still being fired at their children and they are grateful for the decision of IC made in 2022. The said it it helped everyone in the world see what is wrong and what is good on this planet.

Palestine asked rhetorically if we are living in a parallel universe where there is no war. They said that is not their story and it is incorrect to say there is nothing we can do. They said this is the GA's chance. They argued this is not a competition about which country is better but instead, people are dying; 50 000 people have been killed. They said that if/when governments change, sanctions on Israel will not be needed. They encouraged people to vote for option two. They said they do not support option three because this is not the fault of Israeli kids. Finally, they said we are intelligent people who can think critically and find the facts.

Bulgaria asked if a 2/3 majority is needed to reverse the Russia/Belarus decision suggesting that instead of it being indefinite, it should be revisited annually. They said they want option four on the table regardless of which option is selected.

Prompted by Morocco, there was more discussion and debate about the interplay between option one and the subsequent ratification vote requiring a 2/3 majority.

Germany responded to Palestine rejecting their comment about critical thinking. They said that critical thinking can lead to any of the four options; whatever you vote for, it can come from critical thinking.

Pakistan said IOI is not about a competition between countries but about students and a peaceful environment. They said sanctioning countries goes against education principles and our the most important objective of humanity is peace. They said we should not consider options five or six. Recalling instances in the past where countries were banned from activities (e.g. South Africa and apartheid), Pakistan suggested that for lasting peace, the message should be given for the whole world to join hands.

Germany spoke again to say they are not happy with people talking about children in an effort to sway opinion. They said this is, in some way, abusing these kids. They then argued that one way in which the situation with Russia and Belarus was different is that we knew those regimes would take advantage of their participation in IOI as acceptance of their actions in Ukraine.

Greece argued that some of the options, for example option three, do not make sense and that including them for technical reasons distracts from the big picture. They asked that IC remove the options that are not viable. Ben responded to say that all options in the list are there because they were suggested by someone from the GA and IC did not censor any options. He also clarified what "sanction" means by explaining that it means match how Russia and Belarus are currently allowed to participate at IOI.

Slovenia said that that there has been a lot of talk about suffering but questions whether the sanctions of the last two years have accomplished anything. They challenged people to speak to people from sanctioned countries and ask how they feel.

Not hearing any more comments, Ben thanked everyone and expressed an understanding that this was a difficult discussion. He said that he is pleased that the debate was respectful and civil despite the wide range of opinions. He said he is proud to be part of this organization and that it can have this conversation.

Moving to his last slide, Ben read the following proposal which would be discussed now and voted on at the next meeting:

The GA reiterates the obligation of the present host to respect and acknowledge the participation of all national delegations participating in IOI'n, as defined under the IOI regulations.

Luxembourg said the statement is unclear and questions whether we are effectively voting on whether we are unhappy with the exclusion of Israel from the opening ceremony. Ben said this is essentially the GA saying the host should follow the rules even though we know they cannot. Luxembourg asked why this was necessary and Ben said it is because the motion came from the GA.

The United Kingdom spoke to say they were unhappy with what happened. They noted that a sanctioned country had their faces appear on the screen during the opening ceremony, but an unsanctioned country did not. They understood that it might be out of organizers' hand, but they feel it is really unfortunate when a host does not meet its obligations.

Saudi Arabia asked for clarification: does this mean that a host country will have to forego its views? They wanted to know how it might affect a hosting country.

Eslam said it is impossible under the current situation to follow the rules. He said every member country was invited and then since October 7, everything has changed. He said Arabs are very sad and angry about what is happening, and that Egyptians will not accept seeing their brothers killed daily. He asked for forgiveness for this.

Iceland wanted to ensure this motion would just be a statement and not have repercussions for the host country. Ben said it will not affect how the IC interacts with the host.

Germany followed up with Eslam to ask if his comments were a feeling-based view or an official government position. Eslam responded that it is not an explicit rule, but an unwritten understanding.

GA Meeting 5

Mohamed gave a warm welcome to our friends from Iran who arrived today. He also noted that the long-term service award distribution had been moved to GA 7 to give time to print certificates. On this note, he said last year we announced that "very" long-term certificates would be given at the closing ceremony, but because of logistics, this will be done at GA 7 this year instead.

Call for projects

Mile spoke to say every year we make a call for projects with the aim to allocate a sum of money of around 8000 EUR to support work that will help some part of our community. He said usually, the proposal should not affect only one country but at least several or ideally all IOI members. He said this announcement was that call for projects.

Request for data

Sandra reminded the GA of the gender imbalance at the IOI and while there is research on this in computing in general, there is almost nothing on the IOI itself. She said it would be good to have some, but many of us don't have the time to do that research. The good news she announced is that there now is someone who is starting a PhD on this very topic and the GA can help by providing data. She also noted that one of tomorrow's group discussions on a related topic is a good time to make suggestions for this research.

Housekeeping and vote

Ben announced that a sick student is staying at the guest hotel tonight so please do not discuss the tasks at the guest hotel or on the guest transportation - please limit all discussion about tasks to this quarantine area at the translation session.

Ben said IC is aware that it is hard to locate the IOI Allies this year partly because there are so many people and partly because we are so spread out. To address this, he said ally email addresses are now on the IOI website.

Ben told everyone that as promised, he emailed the voting details from the discussion last night. He urged everyone to read it carefully and ask if you have any questions. Slovenia asked why we need a 2/3 majority vote if the option that meets our regulations (option four) is chosen. Ben said the short answer is it has two effects. First, he said it reverses sanctions and second it makes a broader policy for the future. He said it is deemed important and there is precedent (e.g. we did this for the gender proposal in 2023). Also, he said if the vote just passed a 50% threshold, then sanctions on Russia and Belarus would be removed following a conversation on different topic.

Finally, Ben put up the proposal from the GA that was shown and discussed yesterday about the obligations of hosts. A vote was taken, and it passed with 51 votes for, 17 votes against and 14 abstentions.

Slovenia returned to the email about the vote on the conflict and Gaza and asked Ben about the asterisked note connected to option four. The note indicated that to lift sanctions on Russia and Belarus, IC confirmation would be needed because of the 3-year lapse rule. Ben said that this is not expected to be a hurdle, and it is only there because it is a technicality that people have asked about. He said that Russia and Belarus are two countries with strong programs and so if there are no more sanctions on them, he fully expects IC to readmit them to IOI as full members.

Task selection for Competition Day 2

Jakub discussed alterations to the start of translation night because of the previous serious Wi-Fi problems. Suggestions from HSC and the GA included printing tasks, distributing task statements via USB sticks, limiting minor objections to actual errors or potential misconceptions and making use of mobile data.

After the GA had time to study the tasks, Michal spoke to say there were two major objections to be discussed.

First, Poland noted a strong similarity between the problem Hieroglyphs and a task used on their national Olympiad seven years ago. In particular, they were worried that the provided sample solution would score 16 points at IOI. Michal said this was actually not the case. Consequently, ISC recommended that the IOI task set not be changed for this but thanked Poland for bringing the concern forward.

Ali then discussed a major objection raised by Italy on Matrix and spoken to by Japan. They said two of their contestants had solved a problem on AtCoder four years ago that was very similar to the proposed problem Mosaic. Ali compared and contrasted the problems saying it is very hard to have simple but unique problems. As such, he said ISC strongly recommends keeping the IOI task. In response to a question from Mexico, he outlined how the solutions to the two problems in differed in that Mosaic involved many more technical details.

Egypt seconded the objection from Japan. They said that the differences between the two problems are not too big.

Japan added the concern that the problem is too simple. They argued that for a competition like the IOI, it is better to have hard problems. Michal said it is his opinion that IOI is not just for the silver and gold medalists; it is for all of the IOI contestants. He said there are elements of the problem that will challenge the lower end of the contestants.

The United States asked if they could see the back-up problems first before deciding, but Ali said it is not possible without a vote, because back-up problems should be left in the bank. He also emphasized Michal's points.

Egypt expressed the opinion that we need to spread things out near the medal boundaries more and so this relatively easy problem should be replaced.

India said that there is too much of an advantage to contestants that have already attempted the similar problems.

Singapore addressed the issue of zero scores. They said the first subtasks of Mosaic are easier than the easier Day 1 subtasks which was a positive feature. They asked for a general comment about how possible replacement tasks compared in this way. Ali said briefly that the replacement task is interactive which was met with understanding friendly laughs.

Nigeria spoke about some of the low scores on Day 1. Michal responded that in general, we are getting to a dangerous slippery slope when we start voting on the Day 2 task set based on Day 1 results. He warned that it is hard to separate what is good for our own contestants and what is best for the IOI.

Slovakia asked for clarification on the difficulty levels being discussed.

The US said they disagreed that Mosaic is too easy arguing it is based on a non-obvious idea. They then said that this is what concerns them because it gives a huge advantage to contestants who previously saw similar problems. Michal agreed with the assessment of difficulty. On the other issue, he is a bit saddened that we keep using this argument that similar problems give an advantage. He said it is not cheating, rewarding lots of previous practice is not necessarily a bad thing and it trying to avoid this causes problems with finding easier problems.

Japan wanted to emphasize that the IOI should be something that requires people to think. The claimed it is okay for a problem to be easy, but for Mosaic the issue is giving up all the thinking and just requiring experimentation. They said this problem is not suitable for an easy problem. Ali responded by pointing out the difference between difficulty and approachability. He said this problem is approachable which is what we want.

Netherlands followed up to say that approachability might actually be an issue for Mosaic expressing concern that weaker contestants may enter debugging hell. Ali sympathized with this and said he was, in part, comparing to the other problem in the background.

Jakub added some points. He said, yes, there is similarity, but he noted that the queries are not trivial. He then described the task selection process which involved excellent beta-testers who made it clear that the entire problem set was way too hard. As a response, HSC added two easier problems a consequence of which is that the only replacement for an easy problem is a much harder one. Jakub said he understands the concerns expressed but wants to remind everyone that we will create other problems by replacing the task.

Latvia said there are two issues being discussed; one issue is the difficulty level and replacement options; the other is about similarity to other problems. They reminded everyone that this has come up in several recent IOIs. They shared Michal's concern about the difficulty in coming up with unique easier problems and that we are seeing strong evidence of this. They expressed concern about having this specific discussion every year.

Jakub said the easiest way to have an IOI problem accepted is to submit an easy task. Michal agreed suggesting that if you are concerned about non-unique easier tasks, then the best thing to do is submit candidates.

Ben commented that he has not seen the tasks but speaking as a past host where a task was removed and then voted back with changes. He said it was a disaster. He acknowledged that the GA doesn't know the backup tasks but said they do have one key piece of information: the scientific committee does know what these back-up tasks are and has had lots of long conversations about this. Ali concurred but reassured the GA that the back-up tasks are well prepared.

Ali said that because the GA did not seem to be converging on a consensus, the GA would return to Mosaic after voting on the other two tasks. These two tasks were then accepted by a vote with no votes against and a single abstention.

For Mosaic, ISC said there are two options: accept it immediately, or share the backup task and then vote.

Switzerland opposed this approach asking for rationale. Debate ensured and eventually there was a vote on Mosaic. It was accepted with 43 votes in favour, 32 votes against and 32 abstentions.

Michal concluded the discussion by saying ISC is not happy about this because they recognize that almost half the room is not happy with the eventual decision. He said ISC will try to find a suitable compromise because this is an issue we run into year after year.

GA Meeting 6

Report on Competition Day 2

Jakub announced that they finally learned what happened with the Day 1 grader issue saying it stemmed from the creation of vectors of negative size. He then discussed Day 2 issues beginning with some details on two time windows with a latency spike followed by a small list of minor technical issues.

Martin then spoke about the non-uniformity of grader machines. After finding differences between contestant machines on Day 1, he said ITC investigated the grading workers, too. Martin explained that workers were found to have three different memory configurations, but with the same DDR speed. No differences were found after running tests and rejudging of Day 1 submissions and Day 2 was evaluated on all workers.

Jakub returned to talk about questions received during the contest none of which were of significance.

Appeals for Competition Day 2

Jakub announced no Day 2 appeals were received.

He then took a moment to recognize all members of HTC and HSC who worked long hours to make the competition run well. He paid particular thanks to HTC who worked late into the night. Gratitude was also extended to beta-testers who were a huge help and in particular prevented us from having a very difficult IOI.

More on Competition Day 2

Ben then described how one contestant (X) had a mobile phone in the contest hall. The phone was switched on and with the student during at least one toilet break. Two more contestants from the same team (Y, Z) also had mobile phones in the contest hall. Their phones were with them but switched off and in their bags. Ben emphasized that IC discussed this at length, working with HSC and ISC, eventually coming to the conclusions that Contestant X be disqualified and Contestants Y, Z have their day two scores reduced by 50%.

He noted that it was not an easy decision, and it was not unanimous. He added that for the discussion, except for the IC members on the contest floor, IC did not know the country during the discussion. He said the team leaders from the affected

country do know. He pointed out that this does not change the number of contestants. Ben also noted that the bags were let into the competition hall by the hosts which should not have been the case adding steps will be taken to prevent this in the future. All leaders were reminded to ensure their contestants know the rules.

Singapore asked if the contestants had phones on them on Day 1. Ben said we do not know and are leaving their Day 1 scores unchanged.

Bulgaria asked how a 50% reduction was chosen because it feels random. Ben said this is a good question and gave two answers. The short answer was that not everyone agreed what to do. Secondly, IC felt that a stern warning or statement was an insufficient response, and yet disqualification or a full reduction would be too heavy handed.

In response to a question from the Czech Republic, it was confirmed that the affected contestants' bags were beside them during the contest.

Ben said results will be confirmed later because results need to be recomputed and now that this has been made known, the GA will need some time to digest and reflect on the situation.

Notice on the proper usage of large objects in closing ceremony

Mohamed gave the usual reminder about the issue with using large objects during the closing ceremony. In a response to Bulgaria, it was confirmed that flags can appear on clothing and that flags can be brought for pictures after the ceremony. Answering Argentina, Mohamed said flags cannot be worn as a cape.

Presentations by candidates for President and members of IC, ISC and ITC

Richard facilitated this portion of the agenda calling each candidate to speak. The candidates were:

President

Sun Teck Tan

IC

Benjamin Burton
Ágnes Erdősné Németh
Mile Jovanov
Luis Rodolfo Nájera Ramírez
Anton Tsypko

ISC

Charlotte Knierim
Bartosz Kostka
Félix Moreno

ITC

Luca Versari

Results and confirmation of medals

After the preliminary results were posted with no changes to any scores except the aforementioned penalties, the GA voted to confirm the results (which included 353 official contestants) and medals with no votes against and no abstentions.

GA Meeting 7

Report from the ITC

Martin gave a report from ITC beginning with a reminder of their roles. New software was listed: rewritten task proposal dropbox, rewritten `ioisubmit`, and an updated translation system. A list of tools available at https://ioi.github.io/ was also listed: a sandbox, the translation system, a task preparation system, contest utilities, and a technical checklist for future hosts. Martin then welcomed new contributions after describing long term projects: security of grading, performance of CMS, efficient grading of interactive tasks, and new programing languages. Finally, after reminding the GA of existing IOI

infrastructure, Martin said he is very interested in hearing feedback and in particular whether we should continue to pursue machine translation. He said is also keen to hear if anyone would like to contribute to the ITC tool set.

Report from the ISC

Ali presented results of the IOI 2023 survey which were generally very favourable. He asked everyone to take time to fill out the 2024 survey when it is distributed making it known that ISC responded in 2024 to feedback from 2023. Ali also showed that the survey indicated that there currently is no significant demand to add a new language to IOI.

In conclusion, the authors of the IOI 2024 tasks were revealed, and they received a round of applause:

    Nile - Pikatan Arya Bramajati (Indonesia)
    Message - Arthur Nascimento (Brazil)
    Tree - Pikatan Arya Bramajati (Indonesia)

    Hieroglyphs - Felix Moreno (Spain)
    Mosaic - Prabowo Djonatan (Indonesia)
    Sphinx - Joshua Lau (Australia)

    Back-up problems: Jiping Yu, Felix Moreno, Hirotaka Yoneda and Masataka Yoneda

Estonia raised the issue that some countries may not be at IOI because the language they are using is not supported. A bit of discussion, in particular about Python, occurred next. A discussion similar to recent IOIs ensued with Estonia adding the point that perhaps the reason Java and Python were not used much is because support for them was added too late.

IOI President's report

Ben began his report by asking volunteers to leave the room because the report contained some confidential information.

He then gave a big thanks to J.P., Kim and the rest of IC speaking at length about all their contributions. After several rounds of applause, Ben also thanked all team leaders for making his time as president magical.

Next, Ben spoke about diversity and inclusion saying these really matter. He gave personal anecdotes on how diversity and inclusivity in workplaces have affected both himself and people he knows. Continuing, Ben said role models matter and fortunately, every year the leaders and committees are becoming more diverse. He said he looks forward to the day where a woman is IOI President and a young woman in the opening or closing ceremony audience sees this and feels they can fill that role someday.

Speaking personally, Ben said that in Indonesia, he consciously used the word "husband" during the ceremonies not to make a point but because there were LGBTIQ people in the audience, this meant a lot to them and that one word goes a long way.

Ben then supplied some statistics highlighting how poor gender diversity remains at the IOI (roughly 5% of contestants and 7% or 8% of leaders are female or non-binary) acknowledging that EGOI is helping. He said his focus on this issue exists for two reasons. First, he reminded the GA that harassment of women at IOI happened before COVID and still happens today. Next, he said people from outside IOI notice the male dominance, citing how at the IOI 2024 closing ceremony, a local politician and potential sponsor both raised the issue as a concern.

Moving to geographic diversity, Ben said we are the International Olympiad and there is an obvious gap with very low participation in Africa. He said Nigeria is working on this and there is more work to do. Ben said neighbours and connections can help, so if leaders have links in Africa, then they should try to take advantage of them.

Next, Ben said he already spoke about LGBTIQ diversity but wanted to say more. In Iran in 2017, he faced the death penalty for the first time in his life simply because of who he is. However, Ben said that what matters is the host and in 2017, the hosts then were amazing. He said that year after year, he is asked if LGBTIQ contestants will be safe. He said in the past the answer at GA was to put their hands in the air and say they don't know. Consequently, Ben says we now regularly ask hosts how they will help students with different genders, religions, ethnicity, physical abilities, sexual orientations, etc. He said he understands that sometimes these questions cannot be asked formally but, on the ground, everyone can work together to make everyone comfortable. Ben said he wants people to know we are thinking about all of this.

In conclusion, Ben said it has been a difficult few years and some tough work faces us later in this meeting. He said he would love to come to IOI and just do computer science, but some of us do not have this luxury. He said that as the GA, we have the responsibility and burden to answer these questions when asked; whether or not we can help, we owe people the time and respect that they deserve. Ben said we need to notice and feel the wind. There was a very long applause.

Sun Teck then spoke to explain why he feels this emphasis on diversity and inclusion has been damaging. He asked if this has caused anyone here a problem. There was no answer, but Ben said people can perhaps raise this privately with Sun Teck.

Türkiye observed that election candidates had three minutes to speak and questioned if it was right for Ben to give such a long speech for his cause.

Eslam said we are in a community that is about programming, and we should ignore all these issues for one week. He said some things are out of the hosts' hands and these discussions will kill the IOI; the IOI is bigger than one issue. Eslam said we don't have time to talk about these issues and he feared that next someone will want to talk about perhaps religious issues and then perhaps something else. He said his belief is that we should leave these different opinions at home and not talk about issues that separate us. He said we have to respect each other and other countries when we visit them because it is needed to keep IOI sustainable.

Germany said Eslam's view is simplistic. They agreed that we want to focus on programming but argued that as we have seen from the data, we are not doing our job. He said we are not doing this for young women in a satisfactory way and not for other groups too.

Slovenia said that unless we can find an IOI ship that allows us to host in international waters, we will have these issues. They acknowledged friends unable to attend IOI in 2024 for related reasons.

Sun Teck said we mean to be inclusive, and this means everyone should be here. He said it also means every country should be able to host IOI, but what has been said in the opening and closing ceremonies means we are excluding hosts. Sun Teck said this is not okay and we need to allow IOI to grow and think about what is right for IOI. He said the whole world is watching, we have to be careful and respectful, and we need to choose the correct forum for raising these causes.

Palestine wanted to say that what we are talking about is important. They said gender equality and inclusion is important. They pondered how they could tell a student from Gaza that they cannot attend because IOI is not political and the same goes for gender. They said if we are not inclusive, how can we tell students that IOI is just about coding and programming. They said we all have to make decisions today that are hard, and that the media will portray them in ways that we will not accept. Repeating something from the other day, they said history records these things.

Türkiye said a lot of people here want to increase diversity and inclusion, but people need to know what they can do. For example, they said Türkiye hosted the first regional girls Olympiad encouraging everyone to come. However, instead, they claimed that what has happened is that some hosts will have trouble. They said that instead of pretending that we are the United Nations, we should focus on what we can do.

Saudi Arabia wanted to reiterate what Eslam said - we should not put politics into the IOI. They said none of this should prevent us from inviting people and that this is supposed to be a merit-based event. They said we should think about the future and how we can sustain the IOI as a scientific community instead of one with a political bias.

In response to Sun Teck, Ben said what he is doing is something that he feels is right for the IOI.

Adding to the thanks from the beginning of Ben's report, Ali added thanks to ISC specifically acknowledging Michal and Zsolt Németh who are leaving ISC this year. Both received a round of applause.

Financial matters

Eljakim Schrijvers gave his financial report including the following key details:

- 2023 income totalled 22.800 EUR, and 2023 expenses totalled 11.592 EUR both of which were very similar to 2022
- as of December 2023, IOI's assets totalled 163.321 EUR
- differences for 2024 include the emergency expenses and many new global sponsors
- the IOI 2025 budget includes income of 23.000 EUR and expenses of 38.700 EUR

Eljakim note that negative expenses are interest income. Then he explained that in the week leading up to IOI it was found out that about 40% of SSDs for the contest computers were broken. Given the extremely high number of unusable computers, it would have been impossible to run the competition on those machines. Therefore, IC approved the purchase of emergency new hard drives which luckily a sponsor subsequently agreed to pay for.

The Dominican Republic asked about the money in the bank wondering how it is invested. Eljakim said it is in a savings account with zero risk but very little interest.

Michal wanted to bring up again that getting sponsors is non-trivial, so he wanted to thank Eljakim and others for this.

Answering Wolfgang, Eljakim said that the 2023 expenses were mostly as a result of Secretary travel, bank fees, the website, the IOI Journal, the IOI Conference, and awards.

Eljakim asked for a simple approval vote of all financial matters presented via placards. There were no votes against or abstentions.

Elections and voting

Volunteers were welcomed back into the GA room.

Richard reminded everyone of how elections and the Schulze method work. He displayed a sample ballot and said ballots would contain a random code allowing you to check your votes online without revealing to others how you voted. He and the scrutineers then collected votes for the elections and the IOI response to Gaza by paper ballot.

Vote on other regulation changes

Eduard referred to the regulation changes discussed during GA 3 and his follow up message from two days ago. He said items 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 received no additional proposals and minor changes were proposed to items 2 and 6 approved by IC. The seven regulation changes were then approved with 71 votes in favour, 5 votes against and 5 abstentions.

Summary reports from group discussions

Eduard began by briefly summarizing the group discussion on how exceptions should be handled with regards to remote participation and eligibility criteria. In summary he said the majority sentiment was that under the current framework of remote participation, IC should not allow remote participation without an application a year in advance even if remote participation is supported by the hosts. He then conducted several straw polls.

Straw Poll 1: Does GA instruct IC to consider allowing exceptions for remote participation when it is possible by the host?

   There were approximately 50 votes for "yes" and 3 votes for "no".

Straw Poll 2: Does GA instruct IC to work on increasing the age eligibility limit from 20 to 21?

   There were 7 to 9 votes for "yes" and far more votes for "no".

Straw Poll 3: Does GA instruct IC to consider allowing exceptions for the age clause in exceptional circumstances?

   There were 26 votes for "yes" and 41 votes for "no".

Straw Poll 4: What time zone should IC use for the age clause of eligibility criteria?

   There were 41 votes for using the birthplace time zone, no votes for using the country time zone, no votes for using the host time zone, and 34 votes for using the most permissive time zone (UTC+13).

North Macedonia asked if this last poll was a joke. Eduard said it was not and relevant to a specific potential 2025 contestant.

Estonia suggested following a clear-cut rule of another Olympiad.

Türkiye said the difference between least and most permissive is at most one day and we don't know the exact time of start of IOI. Therefore, they said they find the rule ambiguous.

Next, Wolfgang spoke about the group discussion: Promoting girls in computer science: What are the factors for success? He said this was about missed talent at the IOI and a rough straw poll showed that those participating all cared about the issue. Possible ways to address the situation discussed included considering teams, including multiple gender actors in task statements, address entry level competitions and holding a worldwide competition for girls. Wolfgang said he would be happy to share the full list of ideas.

Finally, Wolfgang spoke about the group discussion: Uniform dressing, flags, nationality: possible dangers to the IOI spirit? He wondered if they go against the spirit of IOI and somehow suggest the event is about pitting countries against each other. He said maybe the concern comes from his own experience because the group discussion was very short and quick; people didn't seem to see this as a problem.

Announcement of future host(s)

Ben said that for IOI 2027, IC has taken bids, made a decision, and it was an absolute pleasure to award IOI 2027 to Potsdam, Germany. Loud applause followed and Wolfgang spoke briefly representing Germany. The GA then ratified IC's decision unanimously via placards.

Proposals from GA members

J.P. had circulated four proposals from GA members but the first three depended on pending vote results so only the fourth was addressed at this point in time:

MOTION: The GA requests that the IC present proposals for semi-official remote participation of countries that are unable to attend the IOI due to financial or logistical challenges.
RATIONALE: This should be explored because there has been sufficient positive feedback from the community to Ali's message.

As the proposer of the motion, Ali spoke showing some slides highlighting the important question of why there is so little IOI participation from Africa. He presented ideas for having more nations at IOI:

- Identify a national coordinator for organizing activities.
- Provide free resources like videos, e-books, tasks, grading systems.
- Include easy tasks/subtasks in IOI to boost confidence.
- Offer mentorship by pairing less experienced countries with mentors.
- Organize regional training camps (onsite or online).
- Promote participation in regional contests and online platforms.
- Collaborate with educational institutions to include programming in curriculums.

Some discussion with Eslam followed about what is or could be happening in Africa with respect to regional contests. Ali then discussed financial barriers for countries illustrating that richer countries are disproportionately represented at IOI while also noting that there is no correlation between GDP per capital and IOI scores. Contrary to this, scores are very highly correlated to their population. His main take home message was that over time, low-income countries may still perform well in the IOI despite economic challenges.

Ben then moved to vote but Türkiye made a procedural comment. They said they liked the GDP data but were wary that the impression was left that it was scientific and yet said it was rejected (by them) when submitted to a peer reviewed journal. They suggested returning to this next year with more scientific data emphasizing that correlation does not imply causality.

Ben said the intention is that we don't have a long discussion and suggested follow up continue on Matrix especially given that the motion is only a request of IC.

India asked if this motion is about new countries or already participating countries. Ali said his intention is that this is for new countries only.

Ali's motion was put to a vote, and it passed with 70 votes in favour, 5 votes against and 3 abstentions.

Long-Term Service Awards

Eduard noted that diacritics were omitted from long-term service award certificates, apologised and offered to reprint those certificates next year. He advised all delegations to double-check the certificates and communicate any unexpected issues.

Ben announced the 15-year long-term service award recipients with those present standing in front of the GA for a round of applause:

Ahto Truu, Armen Andreasyan, Damien Leroy, Dragan Urošević, Emil Stankov, Fieke Dekkers, Fredrik Niemelä, Jittat Fakcharoenphol, Jose Trinidad Trino Gomez Barreto, Krešimir Malnar, Madhavan Mukund, Martin Mareš, Michal Forišek, Mile Jovanov, Mohammad Kaykobad, Pedro Ribeiro, Seiichi Tani, Wolfgang Pohl

The 25-year long-term service award recipients present at IOI 2024 were then acknowledged:

Benjamin Burton, Eljakim Schrijvers, George Mandaria, Greg Lee, Gyula Horváth, Jūratė Skūpienė, Mario Cruz, Mārtiņš Opmanis, Ricardo Anido, Richard Forster, Teng Lam, Valentina Dagienė

With time running out and other business to attend to on top of waiting for the result of votes conducted using the Schulze method, the GA was suspended for lunch and scheduled to resume later in the day.

Türkiye asked why Matrix was not used for these votes. Ben said it is because the Schulze had yet to be integrated with ioibot. Ricardo Anido then commented that he wrote software for the Schulze method that is not being used by IOI.

GA 7 Continued (extended from earlier in the day)

Fredrik chaired the start of this extra meeting because some members of the IC including the President, Treasurer and Secretary were late having had lunch with sponsors and the IOI Chair was unavailable on this last day of the event. This was put in motion by a vote of 40 in favour 2 against and 2 abstentions after he made sure quorum was established.

Fredrik spoke about resources for new members. He said the proposed project would aid with tasks and judging systems. He indicated its purpose is to help new and new-ish members. He said there will be calls for help asking experienced members to donate tasks where unused ones are preferred, but lightly used and unpublished tasks are also acceptable. He said tasks would be kept secret for a year and then published to be used for anybody for training. Interested helpers or those who want to use those resources were asked to contact Fredrik.

Bulgaria asked for editorials. Fredrik said he thought this was a good idea and Latvia pointed out that they are available on the "history" webpage for IOI tasks.

At this point, the rest of IC returned from their lunch with sponsors.

Election of President

Richard announced that Sun Teck Tan was elected as the new President of IOI.

Election of members of IC, ISC and ITC

Given the election of Sun Teck, Richard explained that this opened up two positions for IC and through their vote, the GA elected Ágnes Erdősné Németh to a 3-year term and Ben Burton to a 1-year term.

Bartosz Kostka was elected to ISC and Luca Versari was elected to ITC.

Response to conflict in Gaza (vote)

The option chosen via the Schulze method on IOI's response to the conflict in Gaza was option two – to sanction Israel in the same way as Russia and Belarus. This was followed up by the required ratification vote via ioibot. Following a question from Iceland, after checking with the technical team, Richard confirmed that the vote was anonymous. A total of 75 votes were cast with 54 votes in favour and 21 votes against, meeting the 2/3 majority required for ratification.

Proposals from GA members

Next, Fredrik moved to the three remaining motions from the GA:

MOTION: Any vote to remove IOI sanctions from a country requires a 2/3 majority.
RATIONALE: This is a very significant change of policy. According to IOI tradition and precedent, it should require support from more than a simple majority of the GA.

MOTION: IOI removes the sanctions on Russia.
[Only to be voted on if the GA votes in favour of Option 1, or if the GA votes in favour of a different option that then does not meet the 2/3 majority needed in the subsequent vote.]
RATIONALE: The principle of fairness tells us that Israel, Russia and Belarus should be treated the same way.

MOTION: IOI removes the sanctions on Belarus.
[Only to be voted on if the GA votes in favour of Option 1, or if the GA votes in favour of a different option that then does not meet the 2/3 majority needed in the subsequent vote.]
RATIONALE: The principle of fairness tells us that Israel, Russia and Belarus should be treated the same way.

Fredrik noted that the last two motions were now moot, so he called for a vote on the motion about removing sanctions. He said his reading of the regulations was that this required a 2/3 majority which Slovenia agreed with.

North Macedonia disagreed saying removing sanctions brings us back in line with regulations so only a simple majority should be required.

Türkiye argued that sanctioning a country is against regulations agreeing with North Macedonia. They said the issue is that the sanctions are indefinite, and GA should not be overriding regulations which are at the heart of the IOI for more than one year. Also, they said GA is dynamic nature changing from year to year so requiring a 2/3 majority even overrides any new current majority giving preference to past GAs.

There was then lots of confusion about the motion itself and the vote on the motion. Following more debate, the Chair was informed that the proposer had chosen to withdraw the motion and therefore a vote was not needed.

Other Business

Singapore wanted to talk about the controversy of a dress code on Day 1. Suggesting we talk about how to make the IOI better and this was not necessarily just about dress code, they asked that IC try to fully understand what happened that day. Ben said IC was not aware of the dress code plan. Eslam explained that this was a host decision and that they were looking for a neat look and media reports. Singapore replied to say IC can come up with policies to prevent this from happening.

Estonia also said that ICPC has a dress code, but it is announced months in advance and not during the night before the competition. They also don't want to see events in the morning moved earlier when only announced the night before. Fredrik said IC is aware of the issue.

Singapore asked about IOI 2025 dates requesting that for future years, IC make sure we know dates for the next IOI by no later than the end of the previous IOI. IC made it clear that they strongly agree that this should be the case. Jhonatan Castro (Bolivia representative on IC) spoke to apologize and say they understand the concern, but they ran into unexpected difficulties. He said they expect to have dates in one or two weeks.

Chile expressed a list of concerns about this year: not respecting dietary restrictions, some participants missing the stop at the pyramids before the closing ceremony and the absence of a designated person to speak to or other official channel for questions and complaints. They also asked that IC oversee that such things are under control, so we don't experience the same problems all over again in future years.

Germany emphasized that considering cases of dietary restrictions is a matter of inclusion. Ben said we take this very seriously and work with future hosts.

India strongly and specifically recommended that food be labelled.

Ben spoke up to say that if there are any other concerns you have that you would like IC to address, then you can email J.P. Specific concerns can then be raised with future hosts.

Bulgaria wanted to know if there are plans to address the contest security concerns. Ben said this was discussed at great length at IC. He reassured the GA that IC keenly understands the concern. Ali pointed to his posts on Matrix, and he is happy to share more details privately.

Türkiye talked about IOI 3. He said we should talk to Australia to ensure there won't be such teams in the future. Ben commented that this was done as the result of a decision by the IC but, of course, he stepped out of the room for that decision. He also said he was happy to chat if anyone wanted more information. Türkiye retorted that maybe GA should have voted on this because inclusivity is our goal. Ben assured everyone that the IC took every precaution in this case and acted in the most conservative way possible.

As the new president, Sun Teck said a few words. First, he thanked the GA for their support. He said speeches are not his strength but rather his strength is getting things done. He apologized for some IC members' late arrival to this meeting but explained that thy were busy trying to secure future sponsorship. Sun Teck urged anyone hesitating about hosting IOI to come speak to him. In conclusion he said he would like to pursue his idea of an IOI Alumni Association.

The very last word was from the current but outgoing president.

Ben asserted that hosting an IOI is an enormous task. He noted that if you have organized conferences and events, it is not the same thing. He said things always go wrong and there are always things you learn to do better next time. Asking Eslam and other organizers to stand, there was a huge round of applause.