Welcome

Ben welcomed everyone with a particular nod to Brian who replaced Yugo on IC.

Apologies

There were no apologies.

Confirmation of Agenda and Meetings

The agenda was confirmed.

Previous Minutes – Confirmation and Matters Arising

The minutes of IC meetings held in February and March 2023 were tacitly approved and no matters from these minutes arose.

Ben mentioned that he recently sent minutes of 2021 IC and GA meetings. He will continue to work on uncompleted minutes from 2022.

Eduard raised the issue of trying to adapt the regulations for scenarios like the pandemic. Ben said IC had agreed this was an exceptional event and trying to codify this in the regulations was not worth the effort.

Urgent Decisions Regarding IOI 2023

László began with logistics. He explained that issues with airport transfers on arrival day stemmed from the security threat posed by a bag left unattended. He then said he would like to address the GA to remind them about the importance of contestants following instructions from their guide and not leaving their hotel without supervision.

There was then discussion about which names to use for delegations during the opening and closing ceremonies with agreement to keep with tradition and current convention. That is, delegations determine their own names. Eduard confirmed that this is what is done for IOI-owned documents such as the website and statistics. He commented that hosts are free to do what lands them in the least trouble.

Upon questions from Eljakim, László clarified the rules around access to hotel spas and dress code expectations (one’s choice for the opening ceremony and more formal for the closing ceremony). He said he will try to make all this clear to the GA.

J.P. noted that a small number of paying guests representing potential new IOI members are in attendance. The IC gave its approval for them to attend GA meetings.
Report by President

Ben said regular Office of the IOI meetings have been very helpful and he thanked those who participated.

Next, Ben reminded IC about the new IOI Ally program. He said we now have a group of trained allies, and they will be introduced at the first GA meeting.

A proposal on election reform to address the gender imbalance on IC was defeated by a vote in February. Ben said he feels strongly enough that he will put the proposal to GA myself. He apologized for moving forward despite the impasse at IC. Eduard noted that it will not be included as part of the package of regulations changes that IC did approve during the winter meetings.

In conclusion, Ben said that we will be hearing a bid for IOI 2026 later in the week.

Report by Secretary

J.P. outlined his regular responsibilities and provided an update on each location from which a membership inquiry has been received: Albania, Cameroon, Libya, Monaco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Puerto Rico, Somalia and Uganda and the United Arab Emirates. He said discussion on the received applications will occur at a later meeting.

J.P. reported that two contestant name change requests have been received but there was no follow-up to the attempt to verify identities in either case.

Many messages were sent to the Secretary about missing materials from IOI 2022 (medals, certificates, swag, etc.) and J.P. asked Brian for an update. Brian informed the IC that these materials are with him in Hungary and will be distributed to pigeonholes.

Funded Projects

J.P. noted that ISC has informally looked at the Task Preparation System work and given it their thumbs up. Mile suggested that the group behind this be sent their final payment, and everyone agreed.

Mile said that he has not received any ideas for new projects and so will make another call for proposals.

J.P. said Mile has kindly offered to continue to lead funded projects after his term on IC ends at the end of this IOI.

Araz wondered why we are not getting any project ideas. Mile mused that COVID could still be at play and visibility may be an issue.

Eljakim suggested an idea. He would like to see solutions to IOI tasks presented in an educational way. He wondered if we could seek a group of people interested in setting up a sustainable way to provide this for all future IOIs. Ben asked what would happen if we received multiple proposals. Eduard said we could set up an application process and choose the best one. This concerned Ben because he worries about turning people away. Instead, he suggested we list this as an example in a call for projects. Eljakim noted that some people feel bad asking for money. In the end, IC agreed to hold a group discussion topic on this to generate ideas and then to include examples from it in a call for projects.

Finances and Budget

As of 31 December 2022, our balance sheet showed a surplus of 152.113 Euros. This followed a year with an income of 23.000 Euros and expenses of approximately 10.000 Euros. Eljakim noted that 674 Euros in registration fees were still owed at that time of which he expects all but 200 to be paid by the end of 2023.

For 2024, Eljakim asked how we want to spend our money. Someone suggested we pay for more resources to prevent the translation system from crashing. Related to this, Eljakim said we need to decide how much to budget for funded projects. Ben suggested we allocate 15.000 Euros and encourage the GA to come forward with proposals for this knowing that we can allocate money than this amount if needed. Eduard said we could also initiate our own ideas such as making IOI Stats open source which he doesn’t have time to do so perhaps funding could support finding someone else to do this work. IC approved the budget with an amount of 15.000 Euros for funded projects.
Eljakim then reported that nothing is unexpected with respect to actual financial figures for 2023.

Next, Ben raised the possibility of a new IC member traveling to the winter meetings with a newborn baby which necessitates the question of childcare. He received a hypothetical request that this possible new IC member’s partner accompany her and the baby to the winter meetings. Ben sought input from IC on this request. He himself also wondered if we would provide financial support. In response to a question from Eduard, he said he wasn’t asking about specifically paying for flight, accommodations, or something else but instead, he was asking more generally about the extra expenses incurred for a partner to come along for childcare. Eslam said that as host, he would cover the additional local costs (e.g., accommodations and meals). Nobody objected to the partner’s presence. Consequently, it was concluded that this boiled down to assisting with the cost of an extra plane ticket. Ben argued that this is really about accessibility, and we should provide the support.

Eslam said it would be important to communicate and explain how difficult it could be to attend IC as a new mother. Ben responded to say that this is not our role.

Araz said we have provided other people with support (e.g., to reduce additional costs incurred because of a disability), but he does not believe we have previously covered the full or partial cost of flights.

Eduard said that people who run for IC know that they are required to fund their transportation to winter meetings and the IOI itself. However, for this situation, he argued it is effectively unfair to ask someone to commit to not having children for three years. Especially given the IOI’s healthy financial situation, he claimed it would be okay to cover the flight of a partner.

Mile disagreed. He said it feels and looks funny to pay for the flight of a partner, but not flights for IC members themselves. He said he doesn’t remember ever having this discussion for a young father and the provision of accommodation and meals is sufficient.

Cathy asked rhetorically what the problem with providing support is. She said we have the money, and this would send an important message especially given that we are trying to attract more women on the IC. She lobbied for even a small amount to signal “we want you here”.

Eslam asked what we would do if the host would not accommodate the partner. He stated the view that we should follow the rules and not provide additional financial support.

J.P. posited that we would cover the costs for many other cases even if the host would not (e.g., for a wheelchair, food for a specialized diet, and devices for accessibility). He claimed this is no different.

Eljakim supported this saying we would surely provide childcare, but for IOI 2024, the host is recommending against using local childcare options. He said the precedent we would be setting is that we take of each other, and we want everyone present.

László said his feelings were like Eljakim’s; we should encourage women to join committees, and this could be a way of providing equal access. He said we are fundamentally determining whether the IC and IOI are socially responsible. He said general rules should not apply, every situation is unique, and decisions need to be made separately in each individual case.

Brian stated that we should not mandate hosts to take on extra costs, but we have the resources and should make good use of it, by supporting a request like this. Brainstorming other situations that might arise, Brian considered the possibility of an IC member losing their job and thus the ability to fund their own travel. He generalized this to suggest we create a small pot of money to support people’s attendance at IC meetings on an ongoing basis. He noted that a lot of time is being spent evaluating this one potential situation and this might simplify and expedite things in the future.

Ben reminded everyone that nobody is arguing that the flights for an IC member themself be covered in this case. He said we do have rules, but they do not apply equally to everybody (e.g., nobody in the room has ever birthed a child). He said we have the money, and it makes the IOI more inclusive. Ben stated a preference do this as a one-off for now and then possibly answer it more generally in February if we wish.

Jhonatan asked if this would become a rule. Ben replied to say we are trying to decide on an individual hypothetical case. Jhonatan followed up a bit later to say he thinks it should be rule instead of an exception.

Eslam felt that even discussion of a current hypothetical case could be delayed until February. He again
asked what we would do if the host opposed this and claimed we should instead support hosts. After reconfirming that Eslam remained willing to make the arrangements and cover the local costs for this hypothetical case, Ben confirmed to Sun Teck that this request is only about the winter meetings and not IOI 2024 itself.

Brian wondered if next year’s host is worried about paying. Eslam replied to say this is about needing to know that a person in this situation is committed to the IC.

As time was running out after a long discussion, Ben called for a vote on IC’s willingness to provide financial support in the amount of 500 Euros for February 2024 should it be required. He said no additional request is being made of the host, but he thanks Eslam for generously offering to cover the local costs. There were 8 votes in favour, no votes against and 2 abstentions.

Eljakim said that, since IC elections have not yet happened, and it’s a relatively minor amount compared to the entire budget, financially, this will be recorded as part of the contingency line item, if needed.

**IOI 2026 and IOI 2027**

A bid was received from Uzbekistan to host IOI 2026 in Tashkent. The main organizer would be IT Park, which was established by the government in 2019, has branches in all regions of the country, 600 employees (43% of whom are women) and a significant budget allocated to Olympiads in. Makhliyo Muksinova presented the bid outlining tentative dates, venues, accommodations, partners, and key individuals. She then answered an array of questions from IC members. In conclusion, there was some discussion about what happens next and how committees work.

IC then deliberated privately. The bid was received positively by IC and it was observed that it will only be made stronger by as many organizers as possible attending IOI in 2024 and 2025.

A vote was taken, and the bid was accepted unanimously (one person was absent).

Speaking more generally, Eduard suggested that IC not pay much attention to a country’s performance when evaluating potential future hosts because preparing an IOI is significantly different than forming a team especially adept at solving IOI tasks in five hours. On a different note, Cathy wondered if we could ask hosts to indicate an anti-discrimination stance and values statement of sorts in writing. Ben said we do have a letter exchanging process and it might be possible to redraft these making these expectations clearer.

Moving to IOI 2027 and beyond, J.P. noted that at least four non-member countries have inquired about hosting. Mile said this scenario might not be the end of the world and we might be able to figure out how to make that work. Ben said he was nervous about someone from outside the IOI running an IOI. In the past, a relatively new member was asked to get more experience and bid again when some time had passed. This country did and there was a happy ending.

Ben said he is aware that money is needed to host an IOI. However, he is nervous about choosing hosts only because they have the financial means. He and Eljakim spoke about situations with other Olympiads where this approach has caused problems. Mile put forward the idea of pairing a country with financial resources with an experienced country. Eduard agreed liking this idea.

Ben thanked everyone for the conversation and suggested we keep talking to people about hosting IOI 2027 hoping we can entertain a bid in February.

**Future Host Report – IOI 2024**

Eslam began by providing dates: 25-29 February for the winter meetings and 01-08 September for the IOI. He then reminded everyone of the previously discussed venues, accommodations, excursions, and meeting rooms for which there has been no significant change.

Mile asked about short excursions and access to the beach.
Eduard received confirmation from Eslam that the dates of the IOI can be made public at this time. Eslam also confirmed for him that participants will be encouraged to arrive at the airport in Alexandria (HBE) instead of Cairo (CAI).

Cathy inquired about the dormitory layout for contestants and how mixed gender teams will be handled. Eslam said that girls may be housed in a separate hotel, but it is only 40m or 50m away. He also said there are large common areas both outside and inside. Also, contestants will have access to the pool.

Sun Teck expressed some concern about the budget especially because nobody is lined up to sponsor the cost of machines. Eslam said he shares this concern especially because of the depreciating Egyptian currency. He said this is his biggest current concern.

Eslam also provided a brief update on the outreach he is doing in North Africa and the Middle East working with potential new IOI member countries.

**Regulation Change Follow-up**

When first on the agenda, Eduard said there was nothing to discuss unless new proposals come in. Later, he noted Fredrik Niemelä made suggestions for the proposal on modernizing the IOI report. Eduard said he will do as suggested and remove the word “electronically” which is not necessary and might imply other documents cannot be electronic. He said he would bring Fredrik’s other idea of providing a redacted report to the GA. There was then some discussion about what should be redacted, and it was eventually decided that there wasn’t time on the spot to create guidelines on what to include and what to exclude in a host report.

**Political Issues**

Several questions and complaints about how countries are named were received by IC. The decision was made to continue the convention and tradition of IOI which means each delegation determines for itself how they are named. The point was raised that IOI regulations do not use the term “country” in a political sense, and everyone agreed to consider looking for an alternative noun at the winter meetings in Egypt.

László made IC aware that one guide was the target of ethnic slurs from their contestants. This was related to discrimination and mistreatment within that country. Two IOI allies agreed to speak to the guide in order to decide how to move forward.

**Future Host Report – IOI 2025**

Jhonatan said that organization for IOI 2025 continues and none of the major details have changed since February. In response to a later question from Araz, he confirmed that the budget also remains unchanged.

Next, Jhonatan thanked everyone for welcoming the Senator from Bolivia at the GA meeting and he hopes to be able to bring more organizers to Egypt next year. Then he said https://ioi2025.bo/ is now live and shows a logo for IOI 2025.

In terms of dates, the summer (!) meetings are scheduled for February 23 to February 27 which is just before Carnival. For the IOI itself, Jhonatan sought input from IC. August is when Bolivia will be celebrating a 200-year anniversary which means it is not ideal. He said this has him looking at late July or the first week of September. Ben noted that it is generally best to avoid September because many contestants begin their school year at this time. Eduard mentioned that the IMO dates should also be considered. Cathy asked about the weather and Jhonatan said July is colder at that time which is not ideal. Ben noted that is impossible to find a date that pleases everyone. Eduard said it might be wise to seek input from the GA. Sun Teck said it is probably important to fix the date soon in order to reserve venues.

In conclusion, Edward said it would be good to have visa information ready and public by the next IOI.

**IOI 2024 Remote Participation Requests**

Ben said we have remote participation requests from Iran and Israel for IOI 2024. They were submitted one
year in advance as required. One issue is that formally, one of these countries does have diplomatic relations with Egypt. However, Eslam indicated that he is not confident that visas will be granted and is suggesting they probably will only be able to participate remotely.

Mile re-raised the general issue of allowing remote participation. Ben said that discussion is for the GA because they formed the current regulations. He noted that this effectively needs to go to the GA anyways because of the related proposed regulation change. Eduard said we need to wait for the GA to accept or reject this proposal but there is also the pressure of finding a third-party host. For this reason, Ben said it would be beneficial for IC to decide on these requests pending approval of the regulation change by the GA.

Mile wondered about the possibility of these countries participating online. Ben said he remembers that the original intent was specifically to not allow this. The idea was that remote participants should experience both the joys and troubles of travel. Araz noted that while this is true, the pandemic has made online participation more feasible. Eduard mused that it might be best to try and change the regulation as little as possible. Cathy noted that there is real benefit to coming in person.

As the discussion continued, Ben said the discussion was moving more towards a general chat about IOI being hybrid which is a bigger and broader agenda item.

IC returned to this topic at a later meeting when Eslam was present. He confirmed that he asked us to ask Israel and Iran to apply for remote participation. Consequently, the discussion continued on the question of whether or not we would approve these requests should GA approve the pending regulation change which softens the diplomatic relations condition.

Mile wondered why we need to decide now. J.P. responded to say it is the polite thing to do and it helps these countries tremendously to know their options sooner rather than later. Ben said it also helps us find a remote host and this is the only non-guarantee of the situation should the requests be approved.

A vote was taken with all voting members of IC approving both IOI 2024 remote participation requests pending the GA also giving its approval.

**Discussions with Invited Observers and Other Potential New Countries**

A paying guest representing a new country who applied for membership was given the opportunity to present to the IC. The IC asked a round of questions seeking more information.

**Updates from ISC**

Michal Forišek (Misof) happily stated that this had been another successful year. He said ISC was less busy than usual because of the competence and reliability of HTC and HSC, and he is particularly proud of how everyone worked together to replace one of the tasks.

Misof said one of the issues being discussed as requested by IC is the identification of a single winner. This year, there was a unique contestant at the top of the standings, but Misof said ISC cannot promise that this will always be the case. ISC remains unconvinced that there is a need to determine a single overall winner. Eduard later asked about the previous idea of using time to completion to determine a single winner. Misof said ISC tried to analyze this approach and unanimously decided they don’t like it because it significantly affects contest strategy and would make results more volatile. He noted that perhaps a trophy does not need to be awarded to one person. Instead, it could be a fixed large trophy used year after year on which all top-scorers names are listed.

Discussion followed about concerns surrounding the IOI 2023 mean score and number of zero scores. Misof said approachability is already one of the factors considered when designing a problem set. With respect to problem statements, he said that ISC is going to try to cut down on the less important parts to simplify translation and the time required for contestants to read task statements. He noted that the annual IOI survey will be conducted again, and this might provide insight on contestants’ perspectives on the 2023 problem set.

It was noted that Rust came up as a possible language for use at IOI during a group discussion. Misof confirmed that it will be included on the associated survey question. He also noted that the ease of adding languages is tied to the interface structure of tasks. For example, function calls make adding more languages much more difficult compared to when standard i/o is used. Therefore, Misof said ISC feels that we either
should keep the current functional form and a very small number of languages or move to a standard i/o approach allowing multiple languages. He noted that this latter approach results in difficulty with certain task types (types of batching, interactive problems, etc.). He said that views on these two approaches will also be gauged by the survey.

Mile said that the suggestion for shortening tasks will not help translation. Instead, he said the heart of the text needs to be shorter. Misof replied to say that they already try to do this. Martin also disagreed with Mile and said that the strategy of removing less critical text also helps remove errors.

Mile also asked about simplifying/modernizing parts of the translation system (e.g., leaders needing to sign/ seal printed problem statements). Misof discussed some of the issues but agreed that all leaders do not need to remain at the translation session until the full finalization of each task.

Updates from ITC

Martin Mareš also had praise for the host. Competition-wise, he said this was one of the best IOIs he has ever attended. ITC just provided a few hints and helped tune some Matrix server settings.

On other topics, Martin said ITC would like to rewrite some ancient software, reduce what they view as too many forms of communication (mailing lists, app chats, Matrix, websites, etc.), and ensure website changes are consistently logged. He also noted that there is an unofficial Discord platform for IOI. He said he has some suggestions for future hosts with respect to IOI badges. He agreed with the suggestion that unofficial contestants should without a rank on the scoreboard.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Ben thanked the inaugural group of IOI Allies. He said he hopes there will be both overlap and turnover for IOI 2024. He said he feels the group represented a diversity of gender and language, but the amount of cultural diversity could be improved. Eduard asked if there will be a report. Ben said this came up amongst the group of allies and he did ask them if they would be willing to share their experiences modulo privacy concerns. Araz said it would be helpful to receive even a summary of the number of times the program was used in 2023. Ben said it should be okay and possible to provide this information.

Sponsorship

Sun Teck and Eljakim provided an update on sponsorship. There was good news in that money is available, but bad news in that we do not have anyone providing laptops for future IOIs. Sun Teck floated the specific idea of setting up an IOI alumni community. He said this might be a way to crowd source funding.

New Member Applications

The IC considered and unanimously approved applications for membership from Pakistan and Albania.

A third membership application was considered but most members of IC felt more details were needed. After some discussion, there was 1 vote to accept the application and 9 votes to ask for more information. J.P. asked everyone to send him questions to send to the prospective new country.

Future IOI Host Bids

There was quick discussion of an unorthodox bid from a group of countries. The committee was very positive about the idea and asked J.P. to communicate to the group that they should be encouraged to continue exploring their idea.

With respect to finding a host for IOI 2027, Ben suggested that we set a deadline of the end of November for bids. He said this gives time for a representative to attend the winter meetings. There was no disagreement, although Eslam wondered about setting a later deadline because an earlier one may prevent a group from submitting a bid. In response, the group agreed to extend the deadline if no bids are received by the end of November.
Score Exception

Eduard noted that one contestant was unable to participate for a long time on both competition days. This involved hospitalization. He said the contestant does have submissions, but their total score is zero. Eduard said their leaders think the contestant might prefer that their score not be listed so his plan is to strike the score and he wants IC’s opinion. He would first check with the contestant and then get GA approval. Sun Teck asked about how this would compare to disqualification. Eduard said it will appear differently.

Gender Proposal

After the GA asked IC for a precise formulation of Ben’s gender proposal, IC tackled this matter. Ben said there are two separate changes in the proposal. First, a broad sentiment adding a sentence to the end of S3.4:

The members of the International Committee should reflect the diversity of the communities — both within IOI and beyond IOI — that it aspires to represent.

Secondly, renaming A3.5 as A3.5.1 and adding A3.5.2 which addresses the voting process itself:

If there are candidate(s) of a minority gender and \( n \geq 2 \) elected IC positions available (including President if applicable), then the candidates elected will be the highest ranked candidate of a minority gender, plus the highest ranked remaining \( n-1 \) candidate(s).

- A “minority gender” is defined to be a gender held by at most 1/3 of the voting members of IC whose terms are not ending the year that the election takes place.
- In a year where the President is elected, the election for President should take place first and the highest ranked candidate should be elected. Following this, if there are candidate(s) of a minority gender for IC then at least one such candidate should be elected, as described above.

This regulation will hold up to and including IOI 2028, at which point the GA must revisit it to determine whether it should be kept, revised, or removed.

Ben also suggests adding a new N3.5.2:

Examples of gender are male, female, and non-binary. A candidate may choose not to reveal their gender, in which case it will be assumed that they are not of a minority gender.

Ben said he is now not asking whether IC agrees with the proposal, but instead if there are concerns about the wording. He confirmed for Mile that S3.4 and A3.5.2 would be voted on separately with the statue requiring a 2/3 majority and the appendix change require a 1/2 majority (but would only be put to a vote if the statute change passed).

Araz said that if this passes, the registration system questions on gender should be updated to be consistent. He also said he would rather reword this to say something about upholding the Code of Conduct. His concern is that the proposal can’t fully reflect all the diversity of the community. He also said that he feels there is consensus that there should be diversity in the community, but there is not agreement that there should be diversity on IC.

Cathy suggested “members” should be changed to “composition” and Ben accepted this change as a friendly amendment.

Sun Teck said that he feels the motion should apply only to elected members and he has heard others express this view. Ben responded to say that the 1/3 fraction was meant to partly address this without making a more substantial change.

Mile expressed concern about the S3.4 amendment being too new without enough time to read, absorb and discuss it.

Sun Teck made the point that before this, we didn’t have these problems. He said there was no problem
before this (e.g., with only one woman on IC, it voted unanimously in favour of providing childcare support). He said we are creating, not solving problems here.

Ben clarified that we are not debating the rule, but instead clarifying the text. He said our choices are to send the text without it being softened or to send the hardened original version, and whether to include first statement or not.

After more debate on the specific wording of the statue, Ben suggested we drop the statute piece because we cannot reach an agreement. Eduard said this worries him because the threshold then drops to 50/50 which will cause lots of consternation. Therefore, instead, the room agreed on what the statute should say in principle (if it were to exist) and voted on whether to include it pending final wording tweaks to be drafted by Ben and J.P. There were 7 votes in favour of this, 2 votes against and no abstentions.

Then Ben called for a vote on whether to send the proposed wording of the appendix to the GA. Mile said this goes against our principles because they won’t have seen it with enough lead time. Ben countered that the exact opposite is the case; GA has seen this and this wording is meant to reflect the feedback received. The vote was conducted with 5 in favour of sending the appendix wording to the GA and 4 against.

Before moving to the next topic, Cathy said she wanted to address Sun Teck’s comment about not needing this proposal in general as evidenced by our earlier childcare decision. She said that discussion was not easy and required 45 minutes. She said that in her opinion, she heard very alarming comments. She said if this was a more diverse and representative committee, that issue might have taken 5 minutes. She noted that we made a 5000 Euro exception for the remote participation of two countries with very little discussion. She said she felt she needed to make this point as it was her last meeting on IC. In response, Araz said that he disagrees because he feels the debate was more about the lack of a governing rule or regulation.

**Other Business**

There were no other issues to discuss and outgoing members of IC were thanked for the service.