

# The Board of Governors, 1957-1973

It is now 15 years since the Board of Governors, at that time composed of 23 members, first met in Vienna on 4 October 1957 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Pavel Winkler from CSR. Since 1962, it had 25 representatives, two additional members having been elected in view of the increase in African membership of the Agency. Its composition is now due to increase to 34 as a result of an amendment to Art. VI which received the necessary approvals on 1 June this year.

The total membership of the Agency, which was 57 in 1957, has risen to 103. The first Budget was of the order of \$ 4 million; the Budget for 1973 is \$ 18.1 million. Technical assistance provided in 1958 amounted to about \$ 30,000 and in 1972 it amounted to \$ 5.5 million.

These figures give an indication of the way the Agency has grown and this short review will highlight some of the notable achievements of the Board, since its inception.

The growing pains of the Agency have been described elsewhere<sup>1)</sup>. In the first years it seemed as if the Board was seeking its way, not only through a maze of procedures but through an unending succession of meetings. At that time, the Board met nearly every 3 months and often stayed in session for three weeks — as a consequence the Secretariat barely had time to take into account the decisions of one meeting before it found itself confronted by the next one. Some of the items discussed then will still sound familiar to the members of today: the budget, the establishment of safeguards, the T.A. Programme.

By the establishment of specialized committees such as the Technical Assistance Committee and the Administrative and Budget Committee, the Board managed to shorten the length of its discussions and, after the first five years, found its pace: 4 sessions a year, 2 substantive ones which usually last a week in February and in June, and 2 short ones more devoted to procedural matters, which take place just before and after the General Conference in September. Standing items and procedures have also been streamlined. For instance the bi-monthly report of the Director General — which used to be a 50-page document — has successively become a quarterly in 1964 and a semi-annual report in 1968 in order for it to disappear completely in 1971. The administration itself followed a similar trend by reducing gradually its 50-page report to 4 or 5 pages of facts and figures.

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<sup>1)</sup> Paul C. Szasz: The Law and Practices of the IAEA (STI/PUB/250).

Another trend has also developed through the years: the Chairman waits to feel the consensus of the Board, thereby eliminating voting procedures. Points of contention are, in practice, discussed as much outside the meetings as inside. Discussion may be adjourned, an item postponed, time for reflection is allowed and when the matter comes up again for discussion, the Chair begins to feel the contour of the consensus that is slowly but surely taking shape. After a second or sometimes third discussion a final consensus may emerge — it is usually the result of a compromise which maintains a constructive approach to the problem under consideration and tries to take into account as large a spectrum as possible of the views expressed, bowing here to the international facts of life, and even recognizing directly opposing attitudes.

In the last ten years, the Agency's reputation as a technical agency has been recognized not only outside but also by most Members inside the Board; politics have not coloured those debates which essentially can be described as being of a scientific or technical nature. Even subjects which were controversial in the late '50's, such as the representation of NGO's at the General Conference or the establishment of international safeguards, have either disappeared from the agenda or shed their political overtones. In the case of safeguards, for example, the so-called Randers Committee met in 1960, then a Working Group in 1965 and finally the Safeguards Committee in 1970. Experience has shown that a step-by-step approach has usually taken care of most problems. Certain decisions taken show how diversified the scope of the Board's work is. For instance:

- in 1960 the International Laboratory of Marine Radioactivity in Monaco was established, and
- in 1963 the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste was established.

It is worth mentioning here that when the UN established an Advisory Committee on Science and Technology (ACAST) which, inter alia, concerned itself with the brain drain problem, the establishment by the Agency of an International Centre for Theoretical Physics was quoted as an example to be followed. In fact, a UN study showed that the Agency had been the first in the UN family of organizations to do something about the problem. In the same way, today, one can foresee that the International Laboratory on Marine Radioactivity in Monaco could well become either the nucleus of a regional project for research on the environment in the Mediterranean area or even part of a more complex international programme on marine pollution.

A recent decision by the Board to implement the International Nuclear Information System (INIS) at full scope is another example of an approach taken after a thorough and lengthy examination of the problem. It may have taken four years to reach this decision, but it should go a long way towards solving the problem of scientific information in modern times, at least in the nuclear energy field. The system is also within the wider framework of UNISIST — the UNESCO-proposed world-wide information system — and the Agency will help the FAO to establish AGRIS according to INIS standards and formats and will process input for it.

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- ① The first meeting in Vienna of the Board of Governors; Mr. Carlos Alfredo Bernardes of Brazil, President of the Preparatory Commission, presided prior to the election of the Chairman (1957).
  - ② The third meeting of the General Conference of the IAEA, which closed after two weeks of deliberations, at the Hofburg, Vienna, (1959).
  - ③ Meeting of the Board of Governors during the first session in 1973 this year, in the IAEA Boardroom.





This little-publicized achievement may perhaps have a greater impact on the economy of certain developing countries than is apparent at first sight. Not only does it permit substantial savings to countries embarking on national research programmes, but it is also a "de facto" transfer of science and technology from the most industrialized nations to the others. In the same manner the concept of coordinated research agreements which are undertaken in highly sophisticated laboratories "free of cost" to the Agency at the same time as in developing countries, has proven to be a means not only of keeping abreast of the latest developments in research but also of assisting some national laboratories.

Gradually, too, the Agency's Technical Assistance Programme has evolved from a piecemeal approach, as it was at the beginning, to a more concerted and concentrated one. Whereas it took seven years for the Agency to develop its first Special Fund Project, today it has 9 UNDP large scale projects in progress and 4 in the pipeline.

One of the greatest challenges to the Board occurred in 1968 with the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which assigned a specific role to the Agency. This was closely followed by the convening by the UN of the Non Nuclear Weapons States Conference, where some criticisms of the Agency's work were voiced: the Board itself was found to be not truly representative of the whole membership, and the Conference urged, inter alia, that work be increased in certain areas (such as the exchange of information) and developed further in other fields (such as the simplification of the safeguards system and peaceful nuclear explosions).

The Board's response can best be characterized by the saying "first things first". It considered that what was most important was for the Agency to fulfil the tasks that had been entrusted to it, particularly by Art. III of NPT. The Board thus decided to establish 3 Ad hoc Committees of the Whole: one to review Art. VI of the Statute, one on the use of PNE and one on Safeguards. The latter was to sit for memorable marathon sessions in 1970 and 1971 in order to arrive at a broad consensus on the structure and content of agreements between the Agency and States required in connection with NPT. No participant is likely to forget "the spirit of Vienna" which since then has been frequently alluded to and praised in other international forums.

In its sixteenth year the Board has witnessed the signing of a safeguards Agreement with the Euratom countries, signatories of NPT, the issuance of guidelines for international observation by the Agency of PNE projects and the extension to full scope of the INIS system. Last but not least the Board's own composition has been modified to make it more representative of the Agency's membership as a whole.

Looking back at the work done, and at the challenges met, the Board has no cause for dissatisfaction. On the contrary, looking ahead before the review conference of NPT scheduled for 1975 there may be new challenges: for example • the energy crisis which should be considered in its very broad context, and not only from a nuclear energy point of view; • development aid problems and investment possibilities; • more specific questions concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the environment; • the IAEA has received a specific mandate from the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping Wastes and Other Matter to define high level radioactive material unsuitable for sea dumping. International collaboration is required to discuss such problems before satisfactory solutions can be found, and the Agency's Board of Governors provides both the forum and the opportunity.