





Twenty Years – Austria and the IAEA



The twenty-first regular session of the IAEA's General Conference was opened on 26 September in Vienna. The IAEA's 20 anniversary was commemorated during the Conference. Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger, President of the Federal Republic of Austria, addressed the opening session. Here is an excerpt from his address:

Mr. President, Honoured Delegates, may I express my thanks to you for your invitation to attend the opening meeting of the twenty-first regular session of the International Atomic Energy Agency's General Conference. My late predecessor had the distinction of welcoming the General Conference, as the chief policy-making organ of the IAEA, at its first session in 1957 and on the occasion of the Agency's tenth anniversary in 1967. I should like to transmit to you today the greetings and warm congratulations of the Republic and people of Austria on the completion of the second decade of your organization, an organization which has now become world-wide in scope.

I say this with all the greater personal involvement because I had the privilege, in one of my previous offices, of preparing the 1957 Headquarters Agreement with the IAEA on the Austrian side and have since – with only a three-year interruption – been able to observe the development and activities of your organization at relatively close quarters.

As a representative of the host State, I lay claim to no right to pass any judgement on the Agency. I should, however, like to express one conviction in this connection: the conviction that the IAEA has carried out the tasks assigned to it under its Statute in an exemplary manner and that it enjoys a degree of international trust and respect which goes far beyond that which Governments and peoples normally accord to international organizations. The assignment to the Agency of safeguards responsibilities under the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was a generally recognized expression of this trust.

In 1956 and 1957 Austria did not offer its hospitality to the IAEA with a view to winning a higher degree of personal or material influence within the organization, but because Government and people were convinced – and rightly so – that thanks to its permanent neutrality and thanks also to geographical, historical and social conditions, the Austrian Republic is called upon to assume the role of an international forum. Every State and every people must strive to carry out the functions incumbent upon it, unless it is to become an entity of little or no use to the community of nations.

Opening session of the IAEA's 21st General Conference in the Festsaal of the New Hofburg, a wing of the former imperial palace in Vienna. (Conference photos by Schikola).

It is my keen hope that the new Headquarters in the Donaupark, now approaching completion, will further confirm and reinforce the IAEA's feelings of attachment to Vienna. The erection of the new Headquarters, as I am sure you know, was not the result of any desire for prestige but ensued exclusively from the belief that promises given must be promises kept, and that international organizations and their staffs, having decided to set up their headquarters in Austria, should also feel at home here.

In the years to come, may the IAEA continue to keep faith with the purposes of its Statute, discharge as comprehensively as possible its expanded safeguards responsibilities, heighten understanding of and feelings of responsibility for the use of atomic energy for peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

And if I may express a wish on behalf of my own country, let the names of Vienna and of Austria continue to be harmoniously associated with the name of the IAEA.



The United Nations and the IAEA

At the opening session of the 21st General Conference of the IAEA, a message from Dr. Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the UN, was delivered by Under-Secretary-General V. Winspeare-Guicciardi, who is Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Here is an excerpt from Dr. Waldheim's message:

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is a great pleasure for me to extend my greetings and good wishes to all participants in the General Conference of the IAEA.

Atomic energy has been a major concern of the United Nations since its very beginning. It was the subject of the first Resolution adopted by the General Assembly and since then the organization has endeavoured to deal constructively with the dual nature of atomic energy. Our aim has been to assure that the enormous power of the atom be put to peaceful uses and foster economic progress while at the same time safeguarding against proliferation of nuclear weapons.

As we mark this anniversary, it is fitting to emphasize the impressive achievements of the Agency in this regard and the invaluable contribution it has thus made to the two fundamental objectives of the United Nations: peace and economic development.

In recent years reliance on nuclear power has rapidly increased to meet the world's rising energy needs. Concomitantly, international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy has grown both in its scope and in the number of States involved.

In my annual report to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly I noted that every year the danger of the spread of nuclear weapons increases as the technology becomes more widely known, and I indicated that continuous study and assessment of nuclear weapon problems, including non-proliferation, are clearly required if the international community is to be able to move forward. The Agency is one of the most important international instruments available for limiting some of the dangers involved. I share with the distinguished Director General of the Agency, Dr. Sigvard Eklund, the belief that one of the most notable achievements of the IAEA has been the confidence reposed in it by the world community which invested it with the safeguards functions under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I also firmly believe that the application of Agency safeguards outside as well as within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is of paramount importance to the success of efforts to prevent the diversion of nuclear technology, equipment and materials to military purposes.

On this important Anniversary, I wish to express my appreciation of the outstanding work that the IAEA has done throughout the twenty years of its existence. I should like to pay special tribute to Dr. Sigvard Eklund, the distinguished Director General of the Agency, who has guided its work during the last 16 years with such dedication and devotion to the cause of peace and international co-operation. I am confident that the Agency will continue to play an invaluable role in promoting these goals in the future.

Mr. Akbar Etemad of Iran (left), who was elected President of the 21st Regular Session of the IAEA's General Conference, is shown being greeted by Mr. Hervasio G. de Carvalho of Brazil, who was the temporary President. On the right are Dr. Sigvard Eklund, IAEA Director General, and Mr. David A.V. Fischer, IAEA Assistant Director General for External Relations.

