

Dr Eklund made Director General Emeritus

At the end of its 25th regular session, the General Conference decided by acclamation to confer upon the retiring Director General, Dr Sigvard Eklund, the title of Director General Emeritus of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Tributes were paid to the services of Dr Eklund by representatives of the regional groups of Member States. Chairman of the Board of Governors, Ambassador Maurice Copithorne, said in his tribute that during the 20 years that Dr Eklund had served the Agency as Director General "nuclear energy has firmly established itself as the only foreseeable alternative to fast disappearing fossil fuels. This is in no small part the result of Sigvard Eklund's personal conviction and determination concerning the potential of nuclear power to enhance the quality of life of mankind."

Addressing Dr Eklund personally, Ambassador Copithorne stated "our gratitude is both collective and individual. You have served well the cause of nuclear energy. You have served well the cause of the individual Members of this Agency. Dare we hope that you will continue to be associated with us in our joint endeavours to implement the key objective of this Agency, that of accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world".

Ambassador Copithorne also paid a tribute to Mrs Eklund in the following words "your charm, your warmth, your dedication to the Agency will long be remembered". He ended his statement by saying "to Sigvard and to Anna-Greta, we offer our deepest and humblest appreciation".

On this occasion, the Board of Governors unanimously adopted a resolution which was endorsed by acclamation by the General Conference

"The Board of Governors,

Recalling that Dr Sigvard Eklund has served the Agency throughout his 20 years of service as Director General faithfully and with untiring dedication,

Deeply appreciative of the contribution he has made to the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the cause of peace,

Conscious that no man has done more than he to further the development of the Agency and the attainment of the objectives of its Statute;

Mindful of his great human qualities and his achievements as a statesman and scientist;

Expresses its sincerest gratitude and deepest appreciation to him for the way in which he has discharged the responsibilities of his high office."

In reply, Dr Eklund made the following statement to the General Conference:

"I want to thank you most warmly for the kind words which have been directed to me during the general debate, and for the kind words directed to my wife and myself during this closing session of the General Conference.

"It has been a privilege to serve you. I have been very happy in my work and the years have gone very quickly. I feel obliged to the Member States, and to the specialists in the Member States who untiringly have kept me informed about progress made in their countries. In this way it has been possible for me to keep a certain technical competence in spite of becoming a more and more developed bureaucrat.

"I also want to thank the members of the Board. The Board is in this organization a unique body, in that it is the executive body. I have never felt that in any way intruding on my work. It has been helpful to me it has been a natural thing to bring to the knowledge of the Board the problems that belong to the Board for its final decision. And I especially appreciate the confidence the Board has shown me in a very delicate matter, namely

A biographical note

Dr Sigvard Arne Eklund was born in 1911 in Kiruna, Sweden. He obtained the degree of Master of Science in 1936 and of Doctor of Science in 1946.

From 1937 to 1945 he was first Assistant and then Senior Scientist at the Nobel Institute for Physics, and from 1946 to 1950, Senior Scientist at the Research Institute for National Defence, Stockholm. He was Assistant Professor of Nuclear Physics at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, 1946–56. From 1950 to 1956, he was Director of Research at the then Swedish Atomic Energy Company (AB Atomenergi, Stockholm).

Before his appointment as Director General of the IAEA in 1961, Dr Eklund was Deputy to the Managing Director of AB Atomenergi from 1950, and also Director of the Reactor Development Division at AB Atomenergi from 1957.

Dr Eklund and his wife Anna-Greta have three children.

the appointment of senior staff. Throughout this long period it has never happened that the Board has refused to accept one of my proposals, and that I find very remarkable.

"I also want to thank the staff of the Agency, the members of the Secretariat. It has been a good staff, it has been a disciplined staff, and it has been a staff which has worked well in spite of all the temptations which go with international civil service. Many of them have fulfilled the qualities which Dag Hammarskjöld, once the Secretary-General of the UN, thought were essential for international civil service, namely 'an inner quietness and a heightened awareness'.

"I also had the privilege to work for long periods with two Deputy Directors General. I refer to Dr Hall, the Deputy Director General for Administration, and Professor Zheludev, the Deputy Director General for Technical Operations. I would also like to say a special word of thanks to the staff of my office who, in spite of the somewhat difficult period over the last year, have been very faithful to me and have remained at my side. May I also thank you for the unexpected honour that you have given me by this title of Director General Emeritus.

"I also want to congratulate my successor, Dr Blix. I cannot wish him anything better than that he may enjoy the same confidence, understanding, and collaboration from the Board, the Member States, and the staff, which I have enjoyed.

"The future of the International Atomic Energy Agency is very closely related to the question – Is nuclear energy here to stay with us, or does it only constitute a short parenthesis? I belong to those who think that nuclear energy will be with mankind for many years to come. I think that the IAEA can contribute much to the fostering of this energy source: to be used only for peace, health, and prosperity and not for military purposes.

"With these words, I once again want to thank you on my own behalf and on behalf of my wife."

Further tributes to the work of the Agency, and to Dr Eklund's stewardship, were made at the General Assembly of the UN when it debated the Agency's Annual Report, presented to it for the last time by Dr Eklund on 10 November 1981. The President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the UN, and

twenty-two delegations complimented the Director General for his contribution to the Agency's development.

The President of the General Assembly, Mr Ismat Kittani, stated:

"Dr Eklund has made a unique contribution to the world community in that field during the 20 years of his stewardship. The utilization of atomic power, despite recent setbacks, has increased to a remarkable degree during this period.

"Dr Eklund's firm hand and wise guidance have served as an example of the benefits which strong leadership can provide in the field of international organization."

The Secretary-General, Dr Kurt Waldheim, made the following statement:

"I should like to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved special tribute to Dr Sigvard Eklund, for the vision and unremitting dedication with which he has guided the work of the International Atomic Energy for the past twenty years.

"Dr Eklund's outstanding service to the IAEA, and indeed to the international community as a whole, has been fittingly recognized by the decision of the Agency's General Conference to confer upon him the title of Director General Emeritus. I am very glad that he will therefore continue to be associated with the Agency's work in the years to come and that we shall not lose the benefit of his great expertise and wise advice.

"The Agency's General Conference also adopted a resolution which eloquently expressed the Member States' appreciation for Dr Eklund's major contribution to the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. During his stewardship, the Agency's membership has more than doubled, and nuclear power has played a growing part in meeting the energy needs of the world community. The Agency has also been assigned an increasingly significant role, especially in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in developing an internationally accepted system of safeguards to allay anxieties that the spread of nuclear technology and material might open the door to possible military capabilities. We all owe a particular debt of gratitude to Dr Eklund for his strong personal commitment to these aims and for his tireless endeavours to make them a reality. The solid foundations he has established will, I am sure, enable the Agency to make further advances in this vitally important sphere in the years to come."