

# TENTH SESSION ENDS, TENTH YEAR BEGINS

Whatever the milestone passed, the work of the Agency with its world-wide implications continues. This was brought home when the Tenth Session of the General Conference ended on 28 September. The first meeting of the new Board of Governors was held the same afternoon to inaugurate the tenth year devoted to the promotion of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It was a memorable session of the General Conference, if only for the incentive it gave for sober review of the extent to which the original purposes had been fulfilled, and some impressions of it are recorded below.

An atmosphere of dedication was set at the very start with the fervent plea of Federal President Franz Jonas of Austria that nuclear energy should be used only for peaceful purposes and his declaration that IAEA had offered an outstanding example of true cooperation between nations. Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs to the United Nations, when conveying good wishes from U Thant, said that the Agency was now firmly established in its unique international role and positions.

Messages received from the President of the USA and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR both stressed their support for the principles underlying the Agency's work.

The Director General, Dr. Sigvard Eklund, accepting that the original Statute was drawn up at a time when one of the main concerns seemed to be methods of controlling supplies of fissile material, suggested that the time was approaching for a revision of the Statute to bring it more into line with reality. Amongst achievements, he pointed to technical assistance, under which 900 experts had served in 44 countries, 2750 fellowships had been awarded, 450 scientists had been given training and equipment worth almost three million dollars had been provided. But on the latter work he had to point out that funds were inadequate to meet the needs of developing countries — something like one request in five could be met. In this context, various delegates from developing countries expressed their dissatisfaction during the general debate at the insufficient funds available to the Agency to meet requests for technical assistance from their countries.

Dr. Eklund also stressed the importance of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste, successful beyond the most extravagant hopes of its sponsors; the Monaco Laboratory, which might have to be expanded for effective investigation of radioactivity in the sea; the Middle Eastern Regional Radioisotope Centre for the Arab Countries in Cairo, another successful venture.



Mr. Pote Sarasin, Thailand, President of the 10th regular session of the IAEA General Conference, shaking hands with Mr. Koichiro Asakai (Japan), the outgoing President.

---

Of the 96 member States 77 were represented at the Conference. Applications from Uganda, Sierra Leone and Singapore were unanimously accepted and their membership will come into force when the instruments of acceptance of the Statute have been deposited.

Under the Presidency of Mr. Pote Sarasin, Minister of National Development of Thailand, who was elected to succeed Ambassador Koichiro Asakai of Japan, the general debate lasted for four days. It was characterized by general satisfaction with the Agency's achievements and broad agreement as to what paths the Agency should follow in the immediate future.

With the increasing number of projects placed under the Safeguards System ( 57 reactors in 25 countries by the time the Conference ended), it was not surprising that even more than in previous years this was a subject given close attention.

A large number of speakers dealt with the possibility of further simplifying administration and broadening the scope and area of application.

Referring to the safeguards system, Dr. Sigvard Eklund, declared in his closing statement: "The Agency, as has been repeatedly stated, is ready and willing to play its part when called upon to do so and the existence of a continually more refined safeguards system and procedures is the best contribution we can make to the general cause of preventing atomic energy being used for destructive purposes."

In this connection, President Sarasin declared: "Perhaps the Agency's achievements in this regard may be attributed in part to the fact that it has set about this task quietly and methodically, shielded from the glare of undue publicity. In my personal view, the widening acceptance of effective and unconditional international control can only be beneficial, but this process involves problems and decisions outside our purview."

Among suggestions put forward to improve effectiveness were some for increasing the number and scope of regional projects. Dr. Eklund, in his summing-up, noted the appreciation of the value of these projects but had to warn that expansion might mean the acceptance of increased budgets, particularly if new projects were initiated.

Many delegates expressed great satisfaction with the achievements of the Trieste International Centre for Theoretical Physics which was felt to be particularly valuable for scientists from developing countries. Measures for ensuring the future of the Centre were discussed and tribute paid to the generosity the Italian Government had shown in providing accommodation and funds for it. It was decided that the Agency's responsibility for the continued functioning of the Centre would be determined at a later stage by the Agency's Board of Governors.

Other useful suggestions were for the establishment of research complexes centred around reactors and the possibility that research with experimental reactors could be carried out in developing countries by more advanced countries.

The possibility of holding the sessions of the General Conference only every second year instead of annually, suggested by a number of countries, will be carefully examined.

The budget for 1967 was approved. It totals \$11 899 500, an increase of \$677 500 over 1966. The programme for 1967-68 was also approved.

Voluntary contributions pledged during the meeting amounted to \$1 246 562 from 52 countries, a number of them having made pledges for the first time. This figure is higher than that reached at the same stage last year, but still short of the \$2 million target set by the Conference during the last eight years. A number of countries also announced their intention of donating equipment, fellowships and other gifts.

Attending the General Conference were some distinguished personalities who played important parts in founding the IAEA and guiding it through the

early years of its existence, including: Dr. C.A. Bernardes, President of the Preparatory Commission; Dr. Pavel Winkler, of Czechoslovakia, first Chairman of the Board of Governors; Dr. Paul Jolles, Secretary General of the first Conference; Mr. Sterling Cole, first Director General; and Dr. Karl Gruber, Secretary of State in the Austrian Federal Chancellery, who was for some time Special Adviser to the Director General.

In his closing speech, summing up his impressions of the debate, Dr. Eklund stated: "We commence the tenth year of our history encouraged but not complacent with what we have been able to achieve, confident of the need for the type of work the Agency was established to perform".