

The Vienna International Centre: Keeping Pace with the Growth of Global Challenges



The year 2004 marks the 25th anniversary of the Vienna International Centre. The past 25 years of the United Nations in Vienna have been characterized by excellent relations and cooperation with the host country Austria and the population of the City of Vienna. Important political events over the past quarter century, such as the liberalization process in Eastern and Central Europe, have enhanced Vienna's role as an international city and meeting place. The enlargement of the European Union in May 2004 further enhanced Vienna's geographic position in the very heart of Europe and elevates the stature of the Vienna International Centre, host of the third Headquarters of the United Nations, as a forum for international cooperation.

The United Nations in Vienna has kept pace with the changing face of global challenges. In 1997, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan designated Vienna as the centre of the United Nations fight against "uncivil society", namely those elements which take advantage of the benefits of globalization to traffic in human beings and illegal drugs, launder money and engage in terrorism. Moreover, the downside of globalization has prompted the emergence of new and different forms of global threats, beside the traditional ones. New forms of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction parallel other issues of equal concern, such as the persistence of extreme poverty, the disparity of income between and within societies, the spread of infectious diseases, climate change and environmental degradation.

To rise to new challenges while addressing the old ones, the Vienna International Centre has constantly adapted and re-engineered itself over the years. New organizations have arisen and established organizations have been reformed. Drugs, crime and terrorism are now simultaneously tackled by the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC). Following the escalation of global terror and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Vienna has emerged as the global centre for nuclear non-proliferation. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a critical international role as does the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), which was established in 1997. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which has been at the VIC since 1996, is working towards securing peaceful use of outer space. In 2003, a Division of the Office for Internal Oversight Services was transferred from New York to Vienna. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) continue to facilitate development and international trade, while the UNHCR Representation in Austria works to safeguard the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

I am convinced that the Vienna International Centre will retain its dynamic character and continue to serve as a crossroads in the work for international cooperation and understanding and, thus, serve the global responsibility of the United Nations: the maintenance of peace and security as well as the promotion of economic and social development. Operating, as we do, from the heart of Europe gives us the opportunity to join the European enlargement with United Nations visions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonio Maria Costa'.

Antonio Maria Costa
Director-General
United Nations Office at Vienna



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The Vienna International Centre

OVER 4,000 EMPLOYEES FROM MORE THAN 100 COUNTRIES WORK FROM VIENNA TO MEET THE IDEAS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations came to Vienna almost 50 years ago. The first guest was the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which based itself in the Grand Hotel on the Ring, next to the Opera house in Vienna's historic city centre in 1957. The newly-established UNIDO—the United Nations Industrial Development Organization—followed ten years later. It set up offices in the “Felderhaus” (next to the Rathaus) and some adjacent buildings. When the Vienna International Centre opened its doors in 1979, a number of other United Nations bodies moved to the banks of the Danube. Vienna became, along with New York, Geneva and Nairobi, one of the four United Nations Headquarters.

The creation of the Vienna International Centre began in 1966, when the Austrian Federal Government made an offer to the United Nations. It offered to construct an international centre in Vienna, which could serve as headquarters for the IAEA and UNIDO. In a joint decision taken the following year, the Federal Government and the Municipality of Vienna designated an area on the left bank of the Danube as the site of the international centre. Once it was decided that Vienna would be a new home for the United Nations, an international architectural competition was held, where some 656 architects from 50 different countries sent in their ideas and designs for the centre. The responses were narrowed down to four choices, and finally, Austrian architect Johann Staber's design was selected. The construction of the Vienna International Centre began in the spring of 1973.

The individual buildings were planned keeping in mind their future use; as office, conference and service buildings. The construction costs for the complex were shared by the Austrian Federal Government (65 per cent) and the Municipality of Vienna (35 per cent).

On 23 August 1979, the Vienna International Centre was handed over to the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Commonly known as “UNO City”, it has been rented to the organizations for 99 years at a symbolic rate of 1 Austrian schilling (7 cents) annually.

Today, the Vienna International Centre houses the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO PrepCom) and the United Nations Commission for International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Other United Nations organizations and entities with offices in Vienna are the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the United Nations Postal Administration—Vienna Section (UNPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), which coordinates environmental projects along the Danube.

Offices and organizations that were temporarily based at the Vienna International Centre during the last 25 years include the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) (moved back to New York in 1993) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (moved back to Gaza in 1995).

More than 4,000 employees from over 100 countries work for the Vienna-based organizations. Numerous international conferences and meetings are held annually at the Vienna International Centre. Events of a much larger dimension are held in the adjacent Austria Center.

Twenty-five years after it first opened its doors, the Vienna International Centre continues to play an important role in the United Nations, besides offering many benefits for its host country Austria.



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United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna

“FIELD VOICE” OF THE UN AND PROMOTER OF VIENNA-BASED OFFICES

The main task of the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Vienna is to serve as the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) for Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. UNIS also provides information support to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC) and other United Nations organizations based in Vienna. The office assists in providing press, radio, television and photographic coverage of the activities and meetings of the substantive United Nations units and supports the coverage of other United Nations conferences and events at Vienna. In order to fulfil these tasks, it has to maintain close working relationships with media representatives, government officials, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. UNIS also looks after the Visitors Service, which organizes lectures and conducts guided tours of the Vienna International Centre. (See separate information sheet).

DUAL FUNCTION: UNIS AND UNIC

The role of a United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) as the “field voice” of the Department of Public Information (DPI) is to promote an informed understanding of the work and goals of the United Nations to local audiences around the world. In this sense, UNIS Vienna serves as the “field voice” for Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. Desk officers for the four respective client countries monitor the national media on a daily basis and prepare press reviews of the work of the United Nations. In order to raise awareness on specific issues, meetings and conferences that the organization deals with, information in the form of press releases, brochures, flyers, posters, audio and video material, as well as other information materials are distributed to local representatives of the media, government, academia and non-governmental organizations. UNIS staff also gives presentations on the work of the organization to local audiences and places opinion/editorial articles by the Secretary-General and other senior officials on specific issues in the local media.

As its name implies, UNIS provides information service to the Vienna-based United Nations Secretariat programmes. Its role is to assist these programmes in communicating their activities to a worldwide audience. UNIS Vienna follows the overall mandate of the Department of Public Information (DPI) to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact. In addition to the already mentioned communication tools, such as press releases and other print, audio and video information material, UNIS also organizes press briefings on specific issues or to launch reports, surveys or analyses completed or underway by the Vienna-based United Nations organizations. UNIS also implements special events and information campaigns aimed at specific audiences, such as students, journalists and teachers fora. In the light of the above, cooperation with local partners such as media, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, local authorities and the business community is absolutely essential for UNIS.

PRIORITY THEMES

The Millennium Declaration laid out eight Millennium Development Goals aimed at significantly improving human conditions by 2015. The Goals are meant to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal literacy, end discrimination against women, reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development. Within these Goals are certain themes that are being highlighted every year, like poverty eradication, sustainable development and counter-terrorism. In order to raise awareness and promote specific topics and issues, the United Nations also schedules commemorative events and observances such as conferences and meetings, special decades, years, weeks and days. In the year 2004, for example, the United Nations observes the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition, and the International Year of Rice.

Due to the fact that UNIS Vienna services the Vienna-based Secretariat bodies, the Office's priority communication themes also include the United Nations work in drug control, crime prevention, peaceful uses of outer space and harmonizing international trade law. As an information centre, UNIS Vienna lays a special emphasis on themes of most relevance and interest to the local audiences in the four client countries. Because three out of four client countries are focusing their attention on NATO and EU-related issues, UNIS Vienna also tries to promote the global character of the United Nations as a multinational organization.



United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna
Vienna International Centre
PO Box 500, A 1400 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +(43) (1) 26060-4666, Fax: +(43) (1) 26060-5899
E-mail: unis@unvienna.org, <http://www.unis.unvienna.org>



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UNITED NATIONS
Office on Drugs and Crime

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

CAMPAIGNING AGAINST ILLICIT DRUGS, CRIME AND TERRORISM

The mandate of the United Nations *Office on Drugs and Crime* is to support Member States in the prevention of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. In the Millennium Declaration, Member States also resolved to intensify efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, to redouble efforts to implement their commitment to counter the world drug problem and to take concerted action against international terrorism.

UNODC has country and regional field offices in 21 locations around the world, covering over 150 countries. They represent the operational arm of the organization. Field staff work directly with institutions, civil society organizations and local communities to develop and implement drug control and crime prevention programmes that are tailored to the needs of assisted countries. The UNODC liaison office in New York coordinates activities with United Nations headquarters and other international, regional and non-governmental organizations in North America.

The three pillars of the UNODC work programme are:

- Research and analytical work to increase knowledge and understanding of drugs and crime issues and expand the evidence-base for policy and operational decisions;
- Normative work to assist States in the ratification and implementation of the international treaties, the development of domestic legislation on drugs, crime and terrorism, and the provision of secretariat and substantive services to the treaty-based and governing bodies; and
- Field-based technical cooperation projects to enhance the capacity of Member States to counteract illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

UNODC advocates a balanced approach to drug control, emphasizing the importance of preventive education and treatment for addicts, as well as measures to reduce production and trafficking. The *Office* stresses the public policy implications of the drug issue and advocates that governments address the root causes of drug abuse when formulating economic and social policies. UNODC works to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS through drug abuse prevention and by providing opportunities for treatment and social reintegration to injecting drug users.

UNODC's Global Assessment Programme supplies accurate and current statistics on illicit drug consumption worldwide, which is crucial for developing the best prevention strategies. The Global Youth Network increases youth involvement with the international community in developing drug abuse prevention policies and programmes.

UNODC assists law enforcement, working directly with governments to strengthen their interdiction effectiveness against illicit drugs, and developing their capacities to successfully investigate, dismantle and prosecute trafficking groups. Assistance is delivered through technical experts, modern training in best practice techniques and the provision of technical equipment to support front-line operations. UNODC works in conjunction with its international and regional partners to analyse and share information on global trafficking trends and smuggling methods.

UNODC's Illicit Crop Monitoring Programme establishes methodologies for data collection and analysis to increase governments' capacity to monitor illicit crops and to assist the international community in monitoring the extent and evolution of illicit crops. Alternative development assistance provides new economic opportunities to regions that are transitioning from opium poppy, coca and cannabis cultivation. These projects take into account the rights and views of the intended beneficiaries and address education, health, environmental sustainability, women's participation, food security and other social and economic issues.

UNODC's Legal Advisory Programme delivers legal assistance services to requesting States through a decentralized headquarters/field legal team to establish legal and institutional frameworks for drug control and to effectively implement international drug conventions. The Global Programme against Money Laundering provides training and technical assistance to legal, financial and law enforcement authorities to help develop the infrastructure to address money laundering. It assists governments in developing and introducing legislation against money laundering and the financing of terrorism, and it helps lay the groundwork for the creation of financial intelligence units.

The age of globalization has opened up new forms of transnational crime. Organized criminal groups are expanding at an alarming rate, bringing with them physical violence and the intimidation and corruption of public officials. UNODC's Global Programme against Transnational Organized Crime supports Member States in their efforts to ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary protocols by holding regional ratification seminars, drafting legislation and training police forces, prosecutors and judges. The Programme also publishes information on trends in organized crime, promotes strategies for combating it and provides technical assistance.

The smuggling of migrants and the trafficking of human beings for prostitution and slave labour are some of the fastest growing worldwide problems. Studies also show the increasing involvement of organized criminal groups. The Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings contributes to anti-trafficking efforts through data collection and analysis, policy formulation, and the implementation of projects that advocate action against traffickers, alert groups at risk and assist victims.

Corruption is a major obstacle to sustainable development and good governance. Negotiations among Member States resulted in the first United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003. The Global Programme against Corruption assists countries in assessing the problem and in helping to make the actions of the public sector more transparent. It focuses on judiciaries and criminal justice systems and helps establish national anti-corruption agencies and other "watchdog bodies".

The UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch provides, through its Global Programme against Terrorism, technical and legal assistance to Member States seeking to ratify and implement international legal instruments relating to the prevention and suppression of terrorism. The Branch also works in close coordination with the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Office of Legal Affairs at United Nations headquarters, as well as with regional organizations.



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International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

TRACKING TRAFFICKERS

When several tons of sleeping pills are found en route to a country with medical requirements of only a few kilos, alarm bells ring at INCB, the International Narcotics Control Board located in Vienna.

The Board, established under the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, is the international watchdog of the international drug control treaties which aim to ensure that cultivation, production and use of drugs is limited to medical and scientific purposes and that chemicals are not diverted from their licit manufacture and trade for their use in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Its 13 members are independent experts, not government representatives. Through its secretariat, the Board is in constant contact with relevant authorities in almost every country in the world and manages the control system established by the Conventions, which oblige Governments to furnish information and data to INCB on a regular basis. All data is evaluated by the INCB Secretariat and enables the Board to keep a close watch on all available drugs in all countries at the main stages of production and trade.

Every day, INCB receives requests to ascertain the legitimacy of certain transactions involving controlled substances. Such as the recent enquiry by an Asian country on whether an order of five tons of diazepam (valium) from another Asian country was legitimate. The answer was no, for this quantity exceeds the annual medical requirements of that substance of large industrialized countries. The export of that substance, which is not only frequently abused by heroin addicts but also a common adulterant for heroin, was therefore prevented.

Such incidents are frequent and draw the immediate intervention of INCB with the health and enforcement authorities in the exporting countries. Close cooperation between the Board and Governments prevents the diversion of several thousand tons of chemicals per year, chemicals that are needed to illicitly manufacture drugs. As soon as the more than 160 States Parties to the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances have strengthened their control systems, the diversions of these chemicals will continue to decrease.

In accordance with the international drug control treaties, the Board prepares an annual report on its work. In that report, the Board analyses the global drug situation and alerts Governments to existing and potential trends that may threaten drug control efforts and recommends improvements at both national and international levels. The report is based on information provided by Governments and international bodies to the Board. The annual report of the Board is supplemented by three detailed technical reports on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and on precursor chemicals which can be used in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board

Vienna International Centre

PO Box 500, A 1400 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +(42) (1) 26060-4277, Fax: +(42) (1) 26060-5867

E-mail: secretariat@incb.org, <http://www.unodc.org>



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United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

SPACE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) moved to Vienna in 1993 from the United Nations headquarters in New York. Initially created as a small expert unit within the Secretariat to service the ad hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space established by the General Assembly in 1958, the Office became a unit within the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs in 1962, when the permanent Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space met for the first time, and was transformed into the Outer Space Affairs Division of that Department in 1968. In 1992, the Division became the Office for Outer Space Affairs within the Department for Political Affairs.

The Office implements the decisions of the General Assembly and of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Subcommittees: the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. The Office is responsible for promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space for social and economic development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries.

The Office implements the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, which assists Member States, in particular developing countries, in sharing the benefits of space science and technology and their application to economic and social development. Within the framework of the Programme, the Office organizes training courses, workshops, seminars and other activities to increase awareness of space benefits and to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in space applications in areas such as remote sensing, satellite communications, satellite meteorology, basic space science, satellite navigation and space law. Since its inception in 1971, the Programme has organized, among other activities, about 200 training courses, workshops and conferences attended by more than 10,000 participants. The Office also carries out pilot projects on various space applications as a follow-up to workshops and training courses.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Office maintains the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space and disseminates information contained therein. As part of its technical assistance in the area of international space law, the Office provides a searchable index to the Status of United Nations Treaties Governing Activities in Outer Space, which is now available online. The Office prepares and distributes reports, studies and publications on various fields of space science and technology and their application, as well as on international space law.

The Office provided the substantive secretariat for the three United Nations Conferences on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE), which were held in Vienna in 1968, 1982 and 1999. The Office now supports and participates in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

The Office has two sections: the Space Applications Section, which carries out the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and the Committee Services and Research Section, which provides substantive secretariat services to the Committee, its two subcommittees and their subsidiary bodies.

The Office has a multinational staff, and has been headed by Mr. Sergio Camacho-Lara of Mexico since July 2002.

Office for Outer Space Affairs

Vienna International Centre, United Nations Office at Vienna
A 1400 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +(43) (1) 26060-4950, Fax: +(43) (1) 26060-5830
E-mail: ooa@unvienna.org



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United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

SETTING RULES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND SETTLING DISPUTES

It is widely accepted by developing and developed countries that trade creates wealth and is essential to the economic health of the world. But who works out the rules for international trade and decides how payments should be made and disputes are to be settled?

When world trade began to expand dramatically in the 1960s, national governments began to realize the need for a global set of standards and rules to harmonize and modernize the worldwide assortment of national and regional regulations, which until then, largely governed international trade. They turned to the United Nations, which in 1966 recognized the need for it to play a more active role in removing legal obstacles to the flow of international trade and established the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). UNCITRAL has since become the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law.

Much of the complex network of international legal rules and agreements that affects today's commercial arrangements has been reached through long and detailed consultations and negotiations organized by UNCITRAL. Its aim is to remove or reduce legal obstacles to the flow of international trade and progressively modernize and harmonize trade laws. It also seeks to coordinate the work of organizations active in this type of work and promote wider acceptance and use of the rules and legal texts it develops.

MEMBERSHIP

The Commission comprises 60 member States elected by the General Assembly for a term of six years. Membership is structured to ensure representation of the world's various geographic regions and its principal economic and legal systems.

SECRETARIAT

Located originally at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the UNCITRAL secretariat was transferred to the United Nations Office, Vienna in September 1979. With a staff of 21 (14 legal officers and seven support staff), the International Trade Law Division of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs provides substantive secretariat services to UNCITRAL. The Director of the Division serves as the Secretary of UNCITRAL. To assist UNCITRAL in its work, the secretariat undertakes a variety of different tasks, including preparation of studies, reports and draft texts on topics under consideration for possible inclusion in the work programme; legal research, drafting and revision of working papers and legislative texts on topics already included on the work programme; reporting on Commission and working group meetings; provision of technical legislative assistance to States; preparation of UNCITRAL publications; as well as the provision of a range of administrative services to UNCITRAL and its working groups.

WORK METHODS

Texts designed to simplify trade transactions and reduce associated costs are developed by working groups comprising all member States of UNCITRAL, which meet once or twice per year. Non-member States and interested international and regional organizations are also invited and, since decisions are taken by consensus, not by vote, can actively contribute to the work. Draft texts completed by these working groups are submitted to UNCITRAL for finalization and adoption at its annual session.

TRADE LAW TEXTS

UNCITRAL develops different types of texts to modernize and harmonize the law of international trade. These texts are generally legislative texts, such as conventions, model laws and legislative guides, or non-legislative texts such as contractual rules that can be incorporated into commercial contracts and legal guides.

Convention: an agreement among States establishing obligations binding upon those States that ratify or accede to it.

Model law: a set of model legislative provisions that States can adopt by enacting it into national law.

Legislative guide: a text that provides guidance for the development of laws, discussing relevant policy issues and choices and recommending appropriate legislative solutions.

Contractual rules: standard clauses or rules designed to be included in commercial contracts.

Legal guide: a text that provides guidance for the drafting of contracts, discussing relevant issues and recommending solutions appropriate to particular circumstances.

TECHNICAL LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANCE

One of UNCITRAL's priorities is providing technical legislative assistance for modernization of trade laws and commercial practices. In addition to promoting understanding of international trade law texts and the benefits they can bring to the expansion of international trade, UNCITRAL assists States to develop the laws required to implement these legislative texts and commercial associations to promote the use of non-legislative rules.

CLOUT

The Case Law on UNCITRAL Texts system is a collection of court decisions and arbitral awards interpreting UNCITRAL texts. Currently, CLOUT includes case abstracts in the six United Nations languages on the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (Vienna, 1980) ("CISG") and the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (1985). Other texts will be added as case law becomes available.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the last 24 years, UNCITRAL has completed major international texts on sale of goods, transport, dispute resolution, procurement and infrastructure development, international payments, electronic commerce and insolvency. International arbitration, transport law, electronic commerce, insolvency law, security interests and public procurement are the focus of current work.

UNCITRAL secretariat

Vienna International Centre

PO Box 500, A 1400 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +(43) (1) 26060-4060 or 4061, Fax: +(43) (1) 26060-5813

E-mail: uncitral@uncitral.org, <http://www.uncitral.org>



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United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA)

25 YEARS VIC—25 YEARS UNPA IN VIENNA

On 24 August 1979, one day after the opening of the Vienna International Centre, the United Nations Postal Administration issued its first United Nations stamps in Austrian currency

The idea of the United Nations issuing its own stamps was first proposed by Argentina in 1947. An agreement with the United States postal authorities was reached in 1951 and it stipulated that the stamps be denominated in United States currency, and used only at United Nations Headquarters.

The first United Nations stamps were issued in US dollar denominations on United Nations Day, 24 October, in 1951. The stamps were an immediate success and sold out within days.

Similar postal agreements were reached with the Swiss and Austrian postal authorities on 11 December 1968. An agreement between the United Nations and the Swiss Postal Telephone and Telegraph Enterprise enabled the Geneva office of UNPA to issue the first United Nations stamps in Swiss francs on 4 October 1969.

A similar agreement with the Austrian government on 28 June 1979 enabled the Vienna office of UNPA to issue the first United Nations stamps in Austrian schillings on 24 August 1979. Since 2 July 2002, due to the change of currency, Vienna United Nations-stamps are issued in Euro.

Since that day, United Nations stamps are issued simultaneously at United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna

Each issue carries a related design theme, with different denominations for each office. The stamps are available from UNPA offices in person or by mail, and from stamp dealers. They are valid for postage when used on mail from the United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

Usually, six new commemorative issues are released each year and remain on sale for 12 months only. After that date, any remaining stocks are destroyed. Commemorative stamps are so named because they commemorate a certain theme. They are never reprinted, even if they are sold out before the end of the 12-month sale period. Definitive stamps have an indefinite sale period and carry denominations necessary for general postal needs. Definitive stamps can be reprinted as necessary.

United Nations stamps are printed all over the world by security printers, both government printing offices and private security printing firms. They are produced under the same security controls used for the printing of bank notes. Collectors appreciate the high quality of the stamps, which undergo many quality controls and are screened by UNPA for any flaws. This makes the United Nations one of the highest-quality producers of stamps among postal administrations.

**Not only do United Nations stamps artistically promote
the aims of the United Nations, they provide income
for the Organization as well**

This income derives almost exclusively from sales of stamps to collectors. The majority of United Nations postage stamps—approximately 85 per cent—are collected by philatelists. The value of all United Nations stamps used for mailing purposes is reimbursed to the US Postal Service, the Swiss PTT or the Austrian PTT, as appropriate.

Human rights, the environment, endangered species and peace are all subjects of universal concern to the peoples of the world. They are also subjects which the United Nations Postal Administration has promoted on its stamps.

Because United Nations stamps reflect the work of the world Organization, the stamps extend beyond the boundaries of philately to draw attention to significant world problems and to serve as a reminder of the United Nations' commitment to its goals.

To celebrate its 25th birthday on 24 August 2004, the UNPA office in Vienna is issuing a picture postcard of the Vienna International Centre with a special cancellation, available at the permanent UNPA sales counter at the VIC's Visitor Centre at Checkpoint 1.

United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA)

Vienna International Centre

PO Box 900, A 1400 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +(43) (1) 26060-4032 or 26060-4025, Fax: +(43) (1) 26060-5825

E-mail: UNPA-Europe@unvienna.org, <http://www.unpa.unvienna.org>



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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Austria

A LONG TRADITION OF ASSISTING REFUGEES

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees opened its representation in Vienna in 1951, the founding year of the United Nations refugee agency. UNHCR is therefore the longest serving UN organization in Austria. In 1979, the office moved to the new Vienna International Centre. From 1991 to 2000, the Representation in Vienna has also fulfilled many regional functions.

For many years, the UNHCR in Austria primarily offered material help for refugees. More recently, the main task was to provide legal protection for refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR monitors the implementation of the relevant asylum laws in Austria according to the Geneva Refugee Convention and makes suggestions on refugee related questions to the authorities. It also works with Austrian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dealing with refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, UNHCR in Vienna maintains close relations with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). UNHCR also raises awareness for the refugee situation through public information, teaching materials, other publications and the website www.unhcr.at. The representation in Vienna supports and co-finances an Austria-wide network of lawyers who give legal advice and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR intervenes directly only in difficult individual cases. It also provides training for government officials and refugee counselors.

A HISTORY OF HELPING

Austria has a long history of helping refugees fleeing from war, torture and persecution. Since 1945, more than two million refugees have come to Austria. Out of them, 700,000 have stayed. As a consequence of different crises, large numbers of refugees sought help in Austria in 1956, 1968, 1980 and in 1992.

In 1956/57 180,000 Hungarians fled to Austria, 160,000 Czechs and Slovaks found safety in Austria in 1968 after the Warsaw Pact troops marched into former Czechoslovakia. Most of the refugees returned to their home countries, some migrated further and some integrated in Austria. In 1980/81, martial law was declared in Poland. As a consequence, 33,000 refugees arrived in Austria, nine out of ten were later resettled in third countries. With the beginning of the war in the Balkans, 13,000 refugees fled from Croatia to Austria in 1991/92. In 1992, the first of the 90,000 refugees started to come from Bosnia. In spring 1999, when the conflict in Kosovo escalated, Austria accepted more than 5,000 refugees on a temporary basis. As soon as the armed conflict was over, the first return movements started.

SEEKING PROTECTION

If someone comes to Austria and seeks protection, he or she has to apply for asylum. Afterwards, the authorities are responsible for examining whether there are reasons to reject the application or whether a third country is responsible for dealing with the asylum claim. First, the "Bundesasylamt" verifies whether the asylum seeker is a refugee or not. A refugee, as defined in the Geneva Refugee

Convention, is somebody who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”. During the interview, the asylum seeker has to recount the story of his or her flight. Officials have to decide whether the person can be granted asylum or not. If the asylum application is rejected, asylum seekers can appeal at the “Unabhängige Bundesasylsenat” (UBAS). These procedures often take years. During this time, asylum seekers have no permission to work. Although the Supreme Court ruled that all asylum seekers who fulfill the conditions as set out in the respective law have the right to get federal care and maintenance, this is often not the case. Many asylum seekers therefore depend on the help of NGOs.

FACING TODAY'S CHALLENGES

During the past two years, the number of people seeking asylum in Austria has decreased considerably. In 2003, 32,364 asylum applications were lodged, compared to 39,354 in 2002. Every year, approximately 1,000 people are granted asylum. In 2003, a new asylum law was passed in Austria. UNHCR heavily criticized its draft saying that it was at variance with the Geneva Refugee Convention. Despite a couple of modifications, the major concerns of UNHCR and other institutions remained in the second draft which was again criticized by the UN refugee agency.

Especially the so-called “Neuerungsverbot” which demands that asylum seekers tell their history of flight at one go without being allowed to add new details later, worries UNHCR. People who have come from war-torn areas, who have undergone violence and torture, are often not able to talk about what had happened to them right after having arrived. The reasons for this may be shame or fear. Moreover, refugees can no longer apply for asylum at certain border posts. UNHCR also criticizes the fact that with the new law, the second instance is weakened. Some groups of asylum seekers can be deported although their asylum procedure has not yet come to an end.

Another issue UNHCR is very concerned about is the process of harmonizing asylum procedures in EU countries. The European Union has been working for several years on the harmonization of asylum procedures in its member States, but has not yet come to a consensus. Since a large number of people continued to apply for asylum in EU countries, many governments introduced tighter laws. Therefore, UNHCR is very concerned that the harmonization process of the EU asylum legislation will result in a substantial deterioration of standards. UNHCR fears that asylum seekers—including refugees—may be sent to countries with insufficient guarantees for their effective protection and may be denied access to an asylum procedure without verification that they would indeed be safe and that their claim would be heard.

In the coming years, UNHCR will continue providing help for refugees by assisting in repatriating them to their home countries provided conditions are safe, by helping them to integrate in their countries of asylum or by enabling them to resettle in third countries.



25 years [Vienna International Centre](#)



United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR AGENTS OF PROGRESS

MISSION

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that focuses its efforts on relieving poverty by fostering productivity growth. It helps developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their fight against marginalization in today's globalized world. It mobilizes knowledge, skills, information and technology to promote productive employment, a competitive economy and a sound environment.

BACKGROUND

UNIDO was established in 1966 and became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1985. As part of the United Nations common system, UNIDO is responsible for promoting industrial development throughout the developing world, in cooperation with its 171 Member States. Its headquarters are located in Vienna, and with 29 country and regional offices, 13 investment and technology promotion offices and a number of offices related to specific aspects of its work, UNIDO maintains an active presence in the field.

CORE FUNCTIONS

As a **global forum**, UNIDO generates and disseminates knowledge relating to industrial matters and provides a platform for the various development agents—decision-makers in the public and private sectors, civil society organizations and the policy-making community in general—to enhance cooperation, establish dialogue and develop partnerships in order to address the challenges ahead. As a **technical cooperation agency**, UNIDO designs and implements programmes to support the industrial development efforts of its clients. It also offers tailor-made specialized support for programme development. The two core functions are both complementary and mutually supportive. On the one hand, experience gained in the technical cooperation work of UNIDO can be shared with policy makers; on the other, the Organization's analytical work shows where technical cooperation will have the greatest impact by helping to define priorities.

SERVICES

UNIDO's services are designed to be easily integrated into country-specific packages and local ownership ensures a custom-made approach. The comprehensive services provided by UNIDO cover:

- Industrial Governance and Statistics • Investment and Technology Promotion •
- Industrial Competitiveness and Trade • Private Sector Development • Agro-Industry •
- Sustainable Energy and Climate Change • Montreal Protocol (substances that deplete the ozone layer) • Environmental management •

FACTS AND FIGURES

Technical cooperation: During 2003, UNIDO's technical cooperation programmes and projects totalled approximately US\$94.6 million. New project approvals in 2003 amounted to about US\$84.4 million. Technical cooperation is funded mainly through voluntary contributions from donor countries and institutions, as well as by the United Nations Development Programme, the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, the Global Environment Facility and the Common Fund for Commodities. Under its new approach, where integrated programmes are the main instrument for the delivery of technical cooperation, 51 programmes are in place and most are in operation. Of the US\$146.7 million already committed, 40 per cent has been allocated to Africa, 20 per cent to the Arab region and 40 per cent to Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Staff: The current Director-General of UNIDO, Carlos Magariños (Argentina), assumed office in December 1997. In December 2001, he was reappointed for a further period of four years. The Organization has three divisions, each headed by a Managing Director. UNIDO employs 540 staff members at headquarters and 130 staff members in the field. In addition, UNIDO draws on the services of over 2,000 international and national experts annually who work on project assignments throughout the world.

Information services, databases, newsletters and tools: UNIDO's information services and databases cover industrial development abstracts; industrial statistics; business environment; finance; industrial technology; energy; agro-industries; National Cleaner Production Centres and biosafety. An important part of UNIDO's global forum function is the publication of the *Industrial Development Report*. Other regular publications are the *Director-General's Annual Report* and *UNIDO at Work*. In addition, UNIDO produces a number of newsletters, such as the electronic weekly UNIDOScope (www.unido.org/unidoscope), the FEATURE article appearing on UNIDO's website and a number of hard copy newsletters produced regularly by the Integrated Programme teams. One of UNIDO's highly successful project appraisal software tools is COMFAR III Expert (www.unido.org/comfar). A more recent tool, UNIDO EXCHANGE (www.unido.org/exchange) provides a business intelligence network.

UNIDO has liaison offices in Geneva (Switzerland) and in New York (United States of America). The Organization is represented by its regional and country offices in 35 countries around the world including regional offices in: Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Thailand, and Uruguay; country offices in Algeria, Bolivia, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe, and Focal Points in: Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Togo, Uganda and Ukraine.

INVESTMENT AND TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION NETWORK

To promote investment and technology flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, UNIDO operates a network of Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs), which are financed by their host countries: Bahrain, Brazil, China (Beijing and Shanghai), France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. The Walloon Region of Belgium also maintains an ITPO at UNIDO headquarters in Vienna.

The ITPO network also includes Investment Promotion Units (technical assistance projects) in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Uganda, which are financed by Italy.

Thirty **National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs)** and programmes, have been established by UNIDO and UNEP.

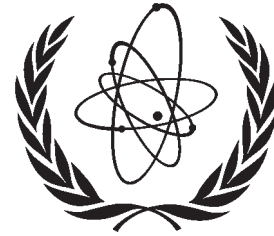
Ten **International Technology Centres** in both developed and developing countries, including Brazil, China, India and the Russian Federation, act as catalysts for technology upgrading and assist in managing technology change.

UNIDO Headquarters

Vienna International Centre
PO Box 300, A 1400 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +(43) (1) 26026-0, Fax: +(43) (1) 26926-69
E-mail: unido@unido.org, <http://www.unido.org>



25 years Vienna International Centre



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

MONITORING THE PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

The IAEA is the world's centre of nuclear cooperation and works for the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies. Three main pillars underpin the IAEA's mission:

- Safeguards and Verification • Safety and Security • Science and Technology •

PROMOTING SAFEGUARDS AND VERIFICATION

The IAEA works to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. The IAEA is the world's nuclear inspectorate, with more than four decades of verification experience. Inspectors work to verify that safeguarded nuclear material and activities are not used for military purposes. The Agency is additionally responsible for the nuclear file in Iraq as mandated by the UN Security Council.

The main areas of activities are:

Safeguards. The IAEA inspects nuclear and related facilities under safeguards agreements with more than 140 States. Most agreements are with States that have internationally committed themselves not to possess nuclear weapons. They are concluded pursuant to the global Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for which the IAEA is the verification authority.

Verification in Iraq. Under UN Security Council resolutions, the IAEA is the inspectorate for nuclear-related monitoring and verification in Iraq. Activities are carried out through the IAEA's Iraq Nuclear Verification Office (INVO).

Additionally, the IAEA assists the international community in nuclear disarmament efforts. Under a Trilateral Initiative with the Russian Federation and United States, the IAEA is supporting steps to verify weapon-origin and other fissile materials that these two countries have released from their defence programmes.

The IAEA Department of Safeguards is the organizational hub for the IAEA's safeguards work, with INVO responsible for the Iraq nuclear file relevant to UN Security Council resolutions.

PROMOTING SAFETY AND SECURITY

The IAEA works to protect people and the environment from harmful radiation exposure. The IAEA helps countries to upgrade nuclear safety and to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Work is keyed to international conventions, standards and, guidance. The main aim is to protect people and the environment from harmful radiation exposure.

Two sets of activities target priorities:

In the safety area, they cover nuclear installations, radioactive sources, radioactive materials in transport, and radioactive waste. A core element is setting and promoting the application of international safety standards for the management and regulation of activities involving nuclear and radioactive materials.

In the security area, they cover nuclear and radioactive materials, as well as nuclear installations. The focus is on helping States prevent, detect, and respond to terrorist or other malicious acts—such as illegal possession, use, transfer, and trafficking—and to protect nuclear installations and transport against sabotage.

The IAEA's work has set the framework for cooperative efforts to build and strengthen an international safety and security regime. This framework includes advisory international standards, codes, and guides; binding international conventions; international peer reviews to evaluate national operations, capabilities, and infrastructures; and an international system of emergency preparedness and response.

Also in place are targeted measures to address specific needs or concerns—two examples are the Action Plan for Protection Against Nuclear Terrorism and the Action Plan on the Safety of Radiation Sources and Security of Radioactive Materials.

The IAEA Department of Nuclear Safety and Security is the organizational hub for this pillar of the IAEA's work.

PROMOTING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The IAEA works to mobilize peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology for critical needs in developing countries.

The IAEA is the world's focal point for scientific and technical cooperation in nuclear fields. The work contributes to fighting poverty, sickness, and pollution of the earth's environment, and to other global "Millennium Goals" for a safer and better future.

The main areas of activities are:

Technical Cooperation. The IAEA supports cooperative projects achieving tangible social and economic benefits for people in developing countries. Many channels and partnerships provide expert services, specialized equipment, training, and other types of support.

Research and Development. Jointly with institutes and laboratories worldwide, the IAEA supports research and development on critical problems facing developing countries. Work targets food, health, water, and environmental areas where nuclear and radiation technologies can make a difference.

Energy and Electricity. The IAEA helps countries assess and plan their energy needs, including nuclear generation of electricity. Major emphasis is placed on the role of "innovative" and advanced technologies vital to meeting the world's rising energy needs.

Where they hold comparative advantages, nuclear science and technology have become preferred solutions—and sometimes the only solutions—to many problems hindering development in poorer countries. They have made significant contributions valued at more than US\$400 million to the world's major goals of sustainable development.

Three IAEA Departments lead programmes in fields of nuclear science and technology: Department of Technical Cooperation; Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications; and Department of Nuclear Energy.



25 years [Vienna International Centre](#)



The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

WORKING FOR NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO Preparatory Commission) is an international organization based in the Vienna International Centre. The Commission's objective is to prepare for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT bans all nuclear weapon test explosions in all environments, and was opened for signature on 24 September 1996.

MANDATE

The CTBTO Preparatory Commission carries out the preparations for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and is preparing for the first session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty. The Commission focuses its activities in two key areas: establishment of a global verification regime to monitor compliance with the comprehensive ban on explosive nuclear testing; and promotion of Treaty signature and ratification for early entry into force. The Treaty will enter into force 180 days after it has been ratified by all 44 States with nuclear capabilities which are listed in its Annex 2.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

The CTBTO Preparatory Commission has a Relationship Agreement with the United Nations, which provides a framework for cooperation between the two organizations. On the occasion of the Millennium Summit, the Treaty was listed among 25 core multilateral treaties representing the key objectives of the United Nations by the United Nations Secretary-General.

COMPOSITION

The Preparatory Commission is composed of all the States which have signed the CTBT. A State becomes a member of the Commission upon signing the CTBT. Member States participate in the decision-making process of the Commission and support its activities through payment of assessed contributions. The Commission consists of two organs: a plenary body composed of all the States Signatories and the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS).

PROVISIONAL TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

The Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) assists the Commission and carries out functions determined by the Commission, including the verification activities listed in the Treaty. The Secretariat started work in Vienna on 17 March 1997. It is multinational in composition: staff is recruited from Member States, on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

The Secretariat is responsible for supervising and coordinating the provisional operation of the International Monitoring System (IMS), and of the International Data Centre. It receives, processes, analyses and reports on IMS data. The Secretariat is also responsible, inter alia, for the development of operational manuals to guide the various components of the verification regime, and for administrative matters such as budgeting and work planning.

THE GLOBAL VERIFICATION REGIME

Under Article IV of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a global verification regime to monitor compliance with the Treaty must be operational at entry into force. The regime must be capable of detecting nuclear explosions in all environments—underground, in water and in the atmosphere. The verification regime consists of the International Monitoring System, supported by the International Data Centre (IDC), a consultation and clarification process, on-site inspections and confidence-building measures.

THE INTERNATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM

The International Monitoring System is a global network of 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories designed to monitor the earth for evidence of a nuclear explosion. The locations of the monitoring facilities are set out in Annex 1 to the Protocol of the Treaty. The IMS uses four complementary technologies to collect evidence of a nuclear explosion. Seismic, hydroacoustic and infrasound monitoring technologies are used to detect the energy produced by a nuclear explosion. These waveform technologies can detect seismic events by identifying the shock wave energy as it travels through water, underground and in the atmosphere.

The waveform technologies confirm the time and location of an event, and radionuclide monitoring technology, which measures the relative abundance of different radionuclides in air samples, is used to provide explicit evidence of a nuclear explosion.

As of 31 December 2003, 88 primary seismic, hydroacoustic, infrasound and radionuclide stations had been completed, of which 68 had been certified as fully meeting the requirements of the system. A further 66 were under construction or contract negotiation. Of the auxiliary seismic stations, 87 had been completed or substantially met specifications, of which 11 had been certified.

THE INTERNATIONAL DATA CENTRE

The International Data Centre is located at the headquarters of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission in Vienna. It supports the verification responsibilities of the Member States by providing objective products and services necessary for effective global monitoring. These products are developed from the data collected by the International Monitoring System, which the IDC uses to detect, locate and analyse events. The data and products are then transmitted to the States Signatories. Data are received and distributed through the Global Communications Infrastructure.

ON-SITE INSPECTIONS

Following the Treaty's entry into force, if a suspected nuclear explosion is detected either by the stations of the International Monitoring System or by national technical means, any Member State can request an on-site inspection (OSI). The purpose of an OSI is to clarify whether a nuclear explosion has been carried out in violation of the Treaty and to gather any information which might assist in identifying the potential violator. On-site inspections are regarded as a final verification measure.

CURRENT STATUS OF TREATY SIGNATURES AND RATIFICATIONS

As of March 2004, the total number of Treaty signatures stands at 171. The total number of ratifications stands at 109. To enter into force, the Treaty must be signed and ratified by the 44 States that formally participated in the work of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament and that possessed nuclear power or research reactors at that time. These States are listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty. Forty-one of these States have signed the Treaty, and 32 have ratified it.

CTBTO Preparatory Commission

Vienna International Centre

PO Box 1200, A 1400 Vienna, Austria

Tele: +(43) (1) 26030-6200, Fax: +(43) (1) 26030-5823

E-mail: info@ctbto.org, <http://www.ctbto.org>



25 years Vienna International Centre



International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)

MAKING THE DANUBE RIVER PROTECTION CONVENTION A LIVING TOOL

THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN— THE MOST INTERNATIONAL RIVER BASIN IN THE WORLD

The Danube River Basin is the catchment area of the second largest river in Europe and covers 817,000km² in 18 different countries. This makes it the world's most international river basin. More than 80 million people—with different cultures, histories and languages—from the Black forest in Germany down to the shores of the Black Sea, call the Danube Basin their home.

Since rivers know no borders, it is only through a joint effort of the Basin countries that the environmental problems of the Danube River Basin can be addressed.

The *Danube River Protection Convention* was developed in response to this realization and came into force in 1998. Today, 13 Danube River Basin countries use it as the legal basis for their efforts geared towards the protection and sustainable use of water and other ecological resources. In addition to the European Union, parties to the Convention include: Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

ICPDR—PART OF THE SOLUTION

The *International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin* (ICPDR) was created to make the Danube River Protection Convention a living tool. Since its establishment, the ICPDR has grown into one of the largest and most active international bodies of river basin management expert in Europe. Its ambitious mission is to promote and coordinate sustainable and equitable water management, including conservation, improvement and rational use of waters for the benefit of the Danube River Basin countries and their people.

The ICPDR pursues its mission by making recommendations for the improvement of water quality, developing mechanisms for flood and accident control, agreeing on standards for emissions and by assuring that these are reflected in the Contracting Parties' national legislations and applied in their policies.

The ICPDR is formed by the contracting countries' national delegations, which are made up of representatives from the highest ministerial levels, technical experts, and representatives of the civil society and of the scientific community.

* Ratification process under way.

ICPDR EXPERT GROUPS—WORKING FOR THE DANUBE

In order to make the ICPDR effective and operational, international expert groups have been set up to develop strategies and guidelines for themes of importance for the Danube Basin. Regular expert group meetings on different levels ensure close cooperation and efficient information exchange between the Basin countries.

COOPERATION—THE KEY TO SUCCESS

In order to achieve its goals, the ICPDR cooperates with regional and international organizations, non-governmental agencies, and the scientific community.

Environmental protection is a community responsibility. To encourage public participation in the assessment and governance of environmental measures and in the decision-making process, efforts have been made to strengthen and develop the NGO community in the Danube Basin. These organizations play an important role in environmental awareness raising and the implementation of projects on nature protection, wetland rehabilitation, ecological farming and urban sanitation.

CHALLENGES FACING THE ICPDR

The challenging tasks of the ICPDR are not likely to decrease in the future; rather, they are to grow as the European Union grows and consolidates. In order for the Danube region to thrive, it is critical that socio-economic innovation should be pursued without jeopardizing the Basin's important ecological resources and values. This can only be done if international cooperation in the Danube Basin is further developed and enhanced.

The ICPDR strives to actively contribute towards this goal by launching a number of initiatives, such as the further reduction of the pollution and the restoring of the ecological network, which should make the Danube Basin a showcase for sustainable water management in a changing world.

Permanent Secretariat of the ICPDR

Vienna International Centre

PO Box 500, A 1400 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +(43) (1) 26060-5738, Fax: +(43) (1) 26060-5895

E-mail: icpdr@unvienna.org, <http://www.icpdr.org>



25 years [Vienna International Centre](#)



Events—Visits—Conferences at the VIC

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST 25 YEARS

Since its opening in 1979, the Vienna International Centre (VIC), the Hofburg Congress Centre and the Austria Center have played host to many international events and visits. Since 1979, Open House Days have given the public the opportunity to visit the building and acquaint themselves with the work of the VIC-based organizations.

EVENTS

Among numerous events held at the VIC, former Austrian Federal Chancellor Bruno Kreisky was awarded the Martin Luther King Peace Prize on 7 December 1989, in recognition of his contribution to the Middle East peace process and for bringing Western and Eastern Europe closer together. On 18 December 1989, 50 soldiers and officers representing Austria's participation in the United Nations peace-keeping missions were awarded commemorative medals at the VIC. Donated by the Austrian Society for the United Nations, the medals were presented at a ceremony by Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock, Defence Minister Robert Lichal and the Society's President Lujó Tončić-Sorinj. The medals were given in recognition of the Austrian Share of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping troops.

VISITS

During the past 25 years, eminent personalities and dignitaries from all over the world have visited the VIC. These include:

- Four Secretaries-General of the United Nations
(Kurt Waldheim, Javier Perez de Cuellar, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan)
- Prince Talal of Saudi Arabia (*July 1982*)
- His Holiness Pope John Paul II (*September 1983*)
- Mother Teresa (*March 1987*)
- Queen Fabiola of Belgium (*October 1994*)
- Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan (*June 1998*)
- Bishop Desmond Tutu addressed the Vienna Public Assembly on Human Rights (June 1998) on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Other high-level participants at the Assembly were the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, Former US-President Jimmy Carter, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Austrian Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel, Jelena Bonner and actor Michael Douglas.

CONFERENCES

Among a number of conferences and meetings which took place during the past 25 years, the following were of particular significance:

The first big conference to take place was the [United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development](#) (UNCSTD, 20-31 August 1979). The focus of the Conference was on how to narrow the technology gap between developed and developing countries.

The [United Nations World Assembly on Disabled](#) (12-23 October 1981) pointed out that disability problems are far greater in developing countries.

The [World Assembly on Ageing](#) (26 July-6 August 1982) discussed the severe problems that the ageing population face in many parts of the world and that hamper their right to fully independent and productive lives.

The [Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#) (UNISPACE-82) (9-21 August 1982) recommended the expansion of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and a broadening of its mandate. As a result, the Programme focused on strengthening international cooperation, not only between the industrialized and developing countries, but among the developing countries themselves and assisting nations in using space technology for economic, social and cultural development.

The [United Nations Conference on Succession of States in Respect of State Property, Archives and Debts](#) (1 March-8 April 1983) adopted a resolution recognizing the right of self-determination and independence for peoples struggling against colonialism, alien domination and occupation, racial discrimination and apartheid.

The [Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protection of the Ozone Layer](#) (18-22 March 1985). The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer was the culmination of almost eight years of effort by the international community to create an obligation to take appropriate measures to protect human health and the environment against adverse effects resulting from the modification of the ozone layer.

The [International Conference for the Immediate Independence of Namibia](#) (7-11 July 1986) formulated a coordinated international programme of action aimed at securing the early implementation of the UN plan for Namibia.

The [International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking](#) (ICDAIT) (17-26 June 1987) aimed at increasing international awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and generating universal action to combat the problem. The Conference also adopted a Declaration committing countries to action against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and to taking urgent measures to strengthen international cooperation.

One of the highlights of the UN Vienna conferences was the [World Conference on Human Rights](#) (14-25 June 1993) which brought together more than 5,000 participants. The Vienna Declaration adopted by this World Conference called for the establishment of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by the General Assembly. The Conference also examined means of improving United Nations human rights mechanisms and the implementation of existing human rights instruments.

The [Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#) (25 September-13 October 1995) failed to reach an agreement on a revised protocol on anti-personnel mines. States parties to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons approved a new Protocol banning the use or transfer of blinding laser weapons and agreed to continue discussing land-mine questions at two further sessions to be held in Geneva the following year.

The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted at the [Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#) (UNISPACE III) (19-30 July 1999) outlined a worldwide programme to protect the Earth's environment and manage its resources, use space applications for human security and welfare and protect the outer space environment.



25 years Vienna International Centre



Host Country Austria

ECONOMIC BENEFITS DERIVED FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

At present, some 30 international organizations have their headquarters in Austria. In addition to the IAEA and UNIDO, which were the first organizations to set up base in Vienna, several other units of the United Nations Secretariat moved to the VIC from New York and Geneva. During the following years, other international organizations which are not part of the United Nations system, also established their headquarters in Vienna. These include Organization of Petrol Exporting Countries (OPEC), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA).

In 2002, these organizations spent some € 480 million in Austria and employed approximately 4,800 staff including some 1,200 Austrians.

In view of their professional qualifications and required mobility, the international civil servants earn a relatively high income. Of the available household income per foreign civil servant, 27 per cent go into savings. From the balance € 132 million, some € 126 million are spent in Austria. Austrians working for these international organizations earn a total of € 45 million which is mostly spent in Austria.

The presence of numerous United Nations organizations in Vienna requires that many Member States also maintain a multilateral representation at these organizations, in addition to their bilateral embassies in Austria. The diplomatic staff of these Permanent Missions also receives a relatively high income. From an average annual household income of € 70,900 per diplomat, one third goes into savings while the balance € 47,251 is spent in Austria.

In addition to the personal expenditure of international civil servants and diplomats employed by the Permanent Missions, the international organizations themselves spent some € 739 million in 2002 to meet their administrative requirements and in the purchase of goods and services. Of this amount, € 412 million was spent in Austria, creating a substantial added value for the Austrian economy. Economic sectors benefiting included:

- retail and whole sale, including food industry (approximately 23 per cent),
- construction and housing (approximately 18 per cent);
- services including legal advice and advisory services, economic services, and interpretation (approximately 13 per cent);
- hotels and restaurants (approximately 9 per cent);
- transport (approximately 6 per cent);
- energy supply (approximately 5 per cent); and
- other services, including cultural activities, entertainment and sport, and health services (approximately 14 per cent).

Conference tourism add a large share—more than € 146 million—to the added economic value derived from the presence of international organizations. Austrian tourism also benefits from the fact that most participants in these events are likely to spend some additional days and nights at the conference venues.

While international organizations, Permanent Missions of Member States and some staff enjoying diplomatic privileges are exempt from paying income tax and have a limited exemption from VAT and some other taxes on consumer goods, they still provide some € 45,5 million annually to the total indirect taxes of their host country.

International organizations are also an important source of employment: Some 8,500 jobs (0.3 per cent of the total workforce in Austria) are being created directly and indirectly by these organizations.

Besides the obvious economic benefits, the presence of international organizations in Vienna also creates many intangible benefits for the host country. As a host country of international organizations, Austria has an added diplomatic advantage compared to other “non-headquarter” States, as the presence of international organizations provide manifold opportunities to Austria to pursue an active foreign policy.

The city of Vienna is enriched both culturally and socially, giving it a higher profile and visibility in the European regional context. The increasing role of international schools and of foreign language theatre and film performances is also an important element in this development.



25 years [Vienna International Centre](#)



Visitors Service

THE VIC—OPEN TO EVERYONE

The gates of the Vienna International Centre are open to everyone. A Visitor Centre, located at the main entrance to the building, is freely accessible to the public from Monday to Friday, between 08.00 and 18.00 hours. Visitors can take a guided tour through the Vienna International Centre, to familiarize themselves with the United Nations and the work of the Vienna-based Organizations.

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours start at the Visitor Centre. During a tour, visitors have a chance to explore the fascinating world of the United Nations and to find out about the work of the United Nations Organizations and Programmes based in Vienna, in fields such as drug control and crime prevention, the peaceful uses of outer space, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, industrial development, international trade law, and banning the testing of nuclear weapons. Visitors see a conference room, a film, and different exhibits. Part of the art collection, presented by Austrian artists and Member States, is also part of the tour. It consists of paintings, tapestries, sculptures and a drinking fountain.

Visitors are welcomed to their tour by a friendly, dedicated team of tour guides, each of whom is fluent in several different languages. The members of the Visitors Service team come from many different countries and backgrounds, and all of them share a passion for the goals and work of the United Nations.

HOW TO TAKE A GUIDED TOUR

Guided tours are offered at the following times:

For individuals and small groups (10 people or less):

Monday-Friday, at 11.00 hours and at 14.00 hours
(no reservation needed)

For groups:

With prior registration

(Can be organized at any time, also on weekends and holidays)

The Visitors Service welcomes groups from all backgrounds, including groups from primary schools, secondary schools, universities, professional institutions, and members of the general public.

Tours take around one hour.

RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION

Vienna International Centre
Visitors Service
PO Box 500, A 1400 Vienna
Tel: +(43) (1) 260 60-3328
Fax: +(43) (1) 260 60-5991
E-mail: tours@unvienna.org
Website: <http://www.unis.unvienna.org>

HOW TO GET THERE

Guided tours depart from the Visitor Centre, located at the main entrance (Gate 1). Take the underground line U1 to the stop “Kaisermuehlen—Vienna International Centre” and proceed to the main entrance/Gate 1.

THE VISITOR CENTRE

The Visitor Centre is the welcoming gateway to the Vienna International Centre, and it is open to the public from Monday through Friday from 0800 to 1900 hours. The Visitors’ Centre is conveniently located at Gate 1, the main entrance to the Vienna International Centre, right next to the underground stop U1, “Kaisermuehlen—Vienna International Centre”.

At the core of the Visitor Centre, an information desk offers materials and brochures on the United Nations, and public enquiries services. From here, you can also book a guided tour.

Furthermore, there are several sales counters such as the United Nations souvenir shop, the UNPA counter selling United Nations stamps, the UNICEF counter with its well-known greeting cards as well as the United Nations Women's Guild counter offering international handicrafts. In addition, the Visitor Centre houses a coffee shop, a hairdresser and a flower shop.