



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.