

2009



UNOV

United Nations Office at Vienna



30
years
vienna
international
centre



For thirty years, since 1979, the United Nations has had its third headquarters (after New York and Geneva) in the Austrian capital, situated in the landmark Vienna International Centre (VIC). In the past three decades, the VIC has become an international hub for human security issues.

Vienna is home to members of the UN family working for peace, security and development. They seek to use atoms for peace (the International Atomic Energy Agency), to reduce poverty through sustainable industrial growth (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), to ban nuclear testing (the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization), to bring the benefits of the peaceful uses of outer space to every part of the world (United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs), to remove legal obstacles to international trade (United Nations Commission for International Trade Law), and to make the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

The VIC also houses the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (which promotes international cooperation to make the Danube cleaner), the International Narcotics Control Board (which promotes compliance with international drug control conventions), the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as regional and country offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Postal Administration, and the United Nations Information Service Vienna.

This range and depth of expertise is a reflection of how the United Nations Office at Vienna is well-positioned and well-equipped to deal with some of the world's most salient challenges.

The Vienna International Centre also moves with the times. In this anniversary year, we celebrate the opening of a state-of-the-art conference facility, the "M" building. We are also intensifying our efforts to make the VIC more environmentally friendly by reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, recycling and reducing waste.

We are proud to be one of the most innovative and dynamic duty stations in the United Nations system. Vienna is also one of the most desirable places to work. We thank the Government of Austria and the City of Vienna for their support and hospitality.

We look forward to many more decades of building a safer, more prosperous and just world.

Antonio Maria Costa
Director-General
United Nations Office at Vienna



Over 4,000 Employees from more than 110 Countries Work at the VIC

The United Nations came to Vienna more than 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, after New York and Geneva, the third United Nations headquarters. (Subsequently, the fourth United Nations headquarters was established in Nairobi). Today, more than 4,000 employees from over 110 countries work for the Vienna-based organizations. They come from all corners of the globe, ranging from Costa Rica, Fiji, Guyana, Mali and Vanuatu, to name just a few.

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 Euro cents) annually.

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

Other United Nations organizations and entities with offices at the Vienna International Centre are the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA), the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNRoD) and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR).

Offices and organizations that were temporarily based at the Vienna International Centre during the last 30 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 and Amman in 1996).

In order to meet the rising demand for conference facilities, the Austrian Government offered to build an additional conference building at the Vienna International Centre. Of 68 projects that were received following an EU-wide tender, the design proposed by Austrian architect Albert Wimmer was chosen. The construction of the M-building began in 2006 and in April 2008 it was inaugurated by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. The new conference building doubles the space for conferences in the VIC, highlighting the importance of the work of the organizations based here, 30 years after the VIC first opened its doors.

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Austria and the United Nations

“International cooperation and dialogue are the foundations of sustainable peace and development. In the heart of Europe and throughout most of its history at the crossroads of different cultures, religions and political systems, Austria has developed a practice of constructive dialogue. Consequently, the work in international organizations and the promotion of multilateral diplomacy are top priorities of Austrian foreign policy. In this regard, Austria ascribes utmost importance to the activities of the United Nations and is proud to host one of its headquarters in Vienna.”

Michael Spindelegger
Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

Austrian activities within the United Nations

Austria and the United Nations enjoy a long and successful cooperation. For Austria, the work with and within the United Nations is a key element of its foreign policy. For Austria, the goals and principles enshrined in the United Nations charter figure amongst the most important standards regulating international relations.

Global problems demand global solutions. The United Nations represents the optimal framework to address multiple challenges from maintaining peace and security to promoting sustainable development and protecting human rights.

Since joining the European Union in 1995, Austria has strived to duly reflect United Nations affairs within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU. At the same time, Austria promotes a coherent EU foreign policy within the United Nations. From the Austrian point of view, the EU can best contribute to the work of the United Nations by speaking with one voice.

Shortly after regaining its sovereignty in 1955 Austria joined the United Nations as the 70th Member State. Since then Austria has acquired an outstanding reputation for actively participating in the work of the Organization.

Three terms of membership in the Security Council underline Austria's readiness to take on responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Austria has repeatedly mediated in international conflicts and is one of the traditional providers of troops for peacekeeping operations. From 1972 to 1981, the Austrian Kurt Waldheim served as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Apart from peacekeeping and conflict prevention, Austria attaches great importance to human rights protection, sustainable development, poverty reduction, the fight against crime as well as disarmament and non-proliferation. Furthermore, Austria promotes the reform of the United Nations system to adapt it to the challenges of the 21st century.

Austrian priorities in the United Nations Security Council

For the third time after 1973/74 and 1991/92, Austria is serving as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2009/10. By electing Austria into this key decision-making body, the international community has assigned the country the task of contributing to the maintenance of global peace and security. Corresponding to the traditional conduct of Austrian foreign policy, Austria will pursue this task in a very open and transparent manner. In November 2009, Austria will hold the presidency of the Security Council.

In the Security Council, Austria strives to fulfil its traditional role as mediator in a balanced and impartial manner. Austria is working on political solutions based on the rule of law with particular consideration of protecting human rights. Moreover, Austria pays special attention to the interests of small and medium-sized countries.

Austria supports a comprehensive approach towards peace that goes beyond short-term crisis interventions. Appropriate measures in post-conflict situations foster sustainable development, strong civil society and good governance and prevent conflicts from rekindling. Austria advocates the enhanced consideration of these issues by the Security Council when mandating peacekeeping operations.

In the course of its membership Austria attaches priority to the following issues:

- Strengthening the rule of law
- Considering the role of women during and after conflicts
- Protecting children and civil society in conflict situations
- Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation

Austria and peacekeeping operations

For almost half a century Austria has been engaged in peacekeeping operations. Since 1960 more than 70,000 Austrian personnel have been deployed in more than 50 peacekeeping operations, including in the Balkans, in Cyprus and on the Golan Heights, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Chad, in Afghanistan and in Timor Leste. Currently more than 1,400 Austrians contribute to maintaining peace and security around the globe within the framework of United Nations mandated operations.

Office of the United Nations in Vienna

Based on a long tradition of hosting international meetings to promote peace and dialogue between cultures and religions, Austria is particularly proud to host one of the United Nations headquarters since 1979.

The Vienna International Centre (VIC), which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is home to the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), 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 other UN offices and entities.

Furthermore the city of Vienna hosts a number of other organizations, particularly the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Vienna ranks top among the cities with the highest quality of life in the world and provides an attractive working environment for more than 5,000 staff members of international organizations from more than 100 different countries. In addition, Vienna as one of the leading venues in the world hosts a large number of international conferences every year.

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

Prohibiting and Preventing Nuclear Explosions

Aim

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) bans all nuclear testing everywhere on the planet – on the surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground.

Why

To obstruct the development of nuclear weapons: both the initial development of nuclear weapons as well as their substantial improvement (H-bomb) necessitate real nuclear testing. The CTBT makes it almost impossible for countries that do not yet have nuclear weapons to develop them. And it makes it almost impossible for countries that have nuclear weapons to develop new or more advanced weapons. It also helps prevent damage caused by nuclear testing to humans and the environment.

History

Between 1945 and 1996, when the CTBT opened for signature, over 2000 nuclear tests were conducted: by the United States (1000+) Soviet Union (700+), France (200+), United Kingdom and China (45 each). Three countries have broken the de-facto moratorium and tested nuclear weapons since 1996: India and Pakistan in 1998 and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 2006. Many attempts were made during the Cold War to negotiate a comprehensive test ban, but it was only in the 1990s that the Treaty became a reality. The CTBT was negotiated in Geneva between 1994 and 1996.

The Treaty has yet to enter into force

All 44 States specifically listed in the Treaty—those with nuclear technology capabilities at the time of the final Treaty negotiations in 1996—must sign and ratify before the CTBT can enter into force. Of these, nine have yet to ratify: China, DPRK, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan and the United States. Three of these, DPRK, India and Pakistan must also sign the CTBT. Otherwise, 180 countries have signed, of which 148 have ratified the Treaty (as of May 2009), including three of the nuclear weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom.

The Treaty Organization

Since the Treaty is not yet in force, the Organization is called the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). It was founded in 1996. Today, approximately 280 staff from 80 of the CTBT's 180 Member States work there. It is headed by the Executive Secretary, Tibor Tóth (Hungary). The CTBTO's main tasks are the promotion of the Treaty and the build-up of the verification regime so that it is operational when the Treaty enters into force. The budget is around 117 million dollars or 86 million euros.

Verification regime

A unique and comprehensive system. At the heart of the verification regime is the International Monitoring System (IMS). When the Treaty enters into force, it will consist of 337 facilities located all over the world that constantly monitor the planet for signs of nuclear explosions. Around 70 per cent of these facilities are already sending data to the International Data Centre at the CTBTO headquarters in Vienna.

The IMS uses the following four state-of-the-art technologies:

Seismic: 50 primary and 120 auxiliary seismic stations monitor shockwaves in the Earth. The vast majority of these shockwaves—many thousands every year—are caused by earthquakes. But man-made explosions such as mine explosions or the nuclear test announced by the DPRK in 2006, are also registered.

Hydroacoustic: 11 hydrophone stations “listen” for sound waves in the oceans. Sound waves from explosions can travel extremely far underwater

Infrasound: 60 stations on the surface can detect ultra-low frequency sound waves (inaudible to the human ear) that are emitted by large explosions.

Radionuclide: : 80 stations measure the atmosphere for radioactive particles, 40 of which also pick up noble gas. Only these measurements can give a clear indication as to whether an explosion detected by the other methods was actually nuclear or not. They are supported by 16 radionuclide laboratories.

On-site inspection

If the data from the IMS stations indicate that a nuclear test has taken place, a Member State can request for an on-site-inspection (OSI) to be carried out. And OSI will collect evidence that will allow the final assessment to be made regarding whether a nuclear explosion—a Treaty violation—has actually taken place. This will only be possible after the CTBT has entered into force. A large OSI exercise was carried out in September 2008 in Kazakhstan.

Civil and scientific applications

The IMS data are provided to the CTBT Member States and to other international organizations. They are used also for applications other than test-ban verification, such as tsunami-warning (by providing timely data), research on the Earth’s core, monitoring of earthquakes and volcanoes, research on the oceans and climate change research.

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Visit www.ctbto.org – your resource on stopping nuclear testing!

2009



IAEA
International Atomic Energy Agency



30
years
vienna
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centre

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Monitoring the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy

“The Agency shall seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. It shall ensure, so far as it is able, that assistance provided by it or at its request or under its supervision or control is not used in such a way as to further any military purpose.” (IAEA Statute)

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the world’s leading forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Established as an independent organization under the United Nations (UN) in 1957, the IAEA represents the realization of US President Eisenhower’s visionary “Atoms for Peace” speech to the UN General Assembly in 1953. He proposed the creation of an international body to both control and support the use of atomic energy.

The IAEA and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 “for their efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way”. The IAEA’s broad spectrum of services and activities serves 146 Member States (February 2009).

The IAEA Secretariat is made up of a team of 2,200 professional and support staff from more than 90 countries. They come from scientific, technical, managerial and other professional disciplines.

Safeguards

The IAEA implements a system of safeguards agreements to help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Through its safeguards activities, the IAEA seeks to verify that a State is living up to its international undertakings not to use nuclear programmes for weapons purposes. To date, 160 States have entered into safeguards agreements with the IAEA, submitting their nuclear materials, facilities and activities to the scrutiny of IAEA inspectors. IAEA verification is further strengthened through an ‘Additional Protocol’ to a country’s safeguards agreement, under which States are required to provide the IAEA with information on all aspects of its nuclear fuel cycle related activities. They must also grant the IAEA wider access rights and enable it to use the most advanced verification technologies. Safeguards activities take place routinely at more than 900 facilities worldwide, including nuclear power plants, research reactors, fuel related facilities and storage locations.

Nuclear technology for development

The IAEA also works to foster the role of nuclear science and technology in tackling pressing worldwide challenges: hunger, disease, natural resources management, environmental pollution, energy production and climate change. Through research and technical cooperation projects, the IAEA facilitates the transfer of nuclear technology to Member States for use in medical, agricultural, industrial, water management and other applications. This contributes to the goals of sustainable development and protection of the environment. Training and research are carried out at the IAEA’s scientific laboratories, as well as all around the globe with the Agency’s support.

Another aspect of the IAEA’s work relates to nuclear power, including its safety and waste management, and ensuring that countries considering nuclear power have the knowledge base they need. A nuclear power programme is a major undertaking requiring careful planning, preparation and investment. It needs a sustainable infrastructure that provides legal, regulatory, technological, human and industrial support to ensure that all nuclear material is used exclusively for peaceful purposes and in a safe and secure manner.

Nuclear safety and security

The future role of nuclear energy depends on a consistent, demonstrated record of safety in all applications. The IAEA's nuclear safety programme provides standards for nuclear installations and radioactive sources, transport of radioactive materials and management of radioactive waste. Although the IAEA is not an international regulatory body, its safety recommendations are used by many countries as the basis for domestic standards and regulations. They include guidance for the location, design and operation of nuclear power plants. The IAEA also performs safety evaluations on request, including on-site reviews of nuclear power plants by teams of international experts.

The IAEA is helping Member States to be better prepared to combat the risk of nuclear terrorism. Key priorities of the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund are to increase nuclear security through adequate physical protection and proper regulatory controls; effective interdiction of illicit trafficking in nuclear and radioactive material; integration of nuclear safety and security systems; and readiness for implementing emergency response plans.

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United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Providing a Platform for Agents of Progress

What is UNIDO?

UNIDO was established in 1966 and became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1985.

Its primary objective is the promotion of industrial development in developing countries and economies in transition. UNIDO also promotes cooperation on the global, regional, national and sectoral levels.

UNIDO works toward improving the quality of life of the world's poor by drawing on its combined global resources and expertise in the following three interrelated thematic areas:

Poverty reduction through productive activities, by promoting industrial growth, focusing on employment and income generation, as well as institutional capacity-building and the development of small and micro enterprises;

Trade capacity-building by assisting countries in building and developing both production and trade-related capacities, including the capacity to conform to the standards of international markets required for participating in international trade;

Energy and environment by focusing on and promoting renewable sources of energy and supporting programmes which maximize industrial energy efficiency, as well as other activities promoting sustainable industrial development and supporting the implementation of international environmental agreements.

How does UNIDO work?

UNIDO employs around 650 staff members at headquarters and in the field. The Director-General of the Organization, Kandeh K. Yumkella (Sierra Leone), assumed office in December 2005.

UNIDO has three policymaking organs: the General Conference, the Industrial Development Board and the Programme and Budget Committee.

The 173 Member States of UNIDO meet once every two years at the General Conference, the supreme policy-making organ of the Organization. The Conference determines the guiding principles and policies, approves the budget and work programme of UNIDO and appoints the Director-General. It also elects representatives to the Industrial Development Board and the Programme and Budget Committee.

The Industrial Development Board has 53 members and reviews the implementation of the work programme, the regular and operational budgets. It also makes recommendations to the General Conference on policy matters, including the appointment of the Director-General. The Board meets once in General Conference years, and twice in other years.

The Programme and Budget Committee, consisting of 27 members, is a subsidiary organ of the Board. It meets once a year and assists the Board in preparing and examining the work programme, the budget and other financial matters.

UNIDO around the world

UNIDO maintains a field network of regional and country offices around the world, many of which cover more than one country. In addition, numerous UNIDO Desks have become operational since the Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was signed in 2004.

A network of Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs) and Investment Promotion Units (IPUs) in various countries promote investment and technology flows to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

In addition, there are several National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs) and Programmes (NCPPs), established by UNIDO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as well as a growing number of International Technology Centres established by UNIDO in various countries.

UNIDO also has offices in Brussels, Geneva and New York.

Budget

The estimated total volume of UNIDO operations for the biennium 2008-2009 is 382 million euros.

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2009



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



30
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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) **Ensuring Security and Justice for All**

The mandate of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is to support Member States in the prevention of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. From headquarters at the Vienna International Centre and through a network of field offices around the world, UNODC helps Member States to reduce their vulnerability to drugs and crime, and to promote security and justice for all.

UNODC's approach is to help States implement the normative instruments that have been developed to control drugs and crime, to carry out research to enable evidence-based policy, and to provide technical assistance to help States counteract drugs, crime and terrorism.

The normative instruments include three drug control treaties, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime with its supplementary Protocols on migrant smuggling, the trafficking of human beings and firearms control. There are also 16 international instruments to counter terrorism.

UNODC research provides the world with in-depth information on drugs and crime. The Office's flagship publication, the World Drug Report, as well as crop surveys of coca and opium are considered the gold standard in this field. Governments, the media and even intelligence agencies rely on this information for authoritative data and analysis on drugs. Other reports focus on regional challenges—such as drugs, crime and security in the Balkans, Caribbean, Central America and West Africa—or pertinent issues such as human trafficking. The Office also has a lab that carries out forensic work and trains drug experts from around the world.

The Office has a range of expertise that is put at the disposal of Member States in order to respond to their drug control and crime-fighting needs. This ranges from anti-money laundering and criminal justice reform, to fighting corruption, preventing terrorism, and preventing and treating drug dependence. In order to share this expertise and to build the capacity of experts within Member States, UNODC has developed a wide range of specialized toolkits and handbooks, as well as software products.

As crime trends evolve, UNODC adapts in order to help States address new challenges like cyber-crime, identity-related theft, environmental crime, and piracy.

Drugs and crime are not only national issues. They have a local impact as well as transnational characteristics. The Office therefore works with cities to ensure that they have effective crime prevention programmes and drug treatment facilities, and encourages regional cooperation to contain the threat posed by drugs and crime. For example, UNODC has brokered the establishment of a centre for counter narcotics information sharing in Central Asia, and has devised regional strategies to combat drugs and crime in the Caribbean, Central America and West Africa, as well as the Paris Pact initiative to counter the traffic in, and consumption of, Afghan opiates.

The Office looks at drugs and crime in a broad perspective. It promotes development in regions vulnerable to growing illicit drugs or caught in the cross-fire of drug trafficking. It promotes security and the rule of law in order to ensure that crime control is based on justice and respect for human rights. Health is at the centre of the Office's approach to drug control: encouraging abstinence, prevention, early detection and treatment, as well as reducing the harm that drugs pose to individuals and societies at large, including the spread of HIV/AIDS through injecting drug use.

UNODC encourages a community-based approach to issues that affect societies as a whole, such as corruption, human trafficking, and drug abuse. It reaches out to civil society, the media, the private sector and the entertainment industry in order to broaden the impact of its work.

Antonio Maria Costa is Executive Director of UNODC. 448 UNODC staff members work at the VIC.

Because it is a relatively small office with big mandates, UNODC works in close partnership with others: teaming up with the World Bank to carry out a Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative; the World Health Organization to scale up drug treatment facilities; development banks to reduce socio-economic vulnerability to drugs and crime; and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to reduce the threat posed by organized crime in post-conflict settings.

In this way, UNODC contributes to a safer and healthier world where there is security and justice for all.

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International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) **Working for the Danube River Basin and its People**

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 817,000 square kilometres in 19 different countries. This makes it the world's most international river basin. More than 82 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 Danube River Basin countries that the environmental problems of the region can be addressed.

The Danube River Protection Convention was developed as such a joint effort and came into force in 1998. Today, 14 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 and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

ICPDR—part of the solution

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (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. 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 by representatives of civil society and of the scientific community.

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International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

Monitoring the Implementation of the Drug Control Conventions

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) is an independent, quasi-judicial expert body established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1954 by merging two bodies: the Permanent Central Narcotics Board, created by the 1925 International Opium Convention; and the Drug Supervisory Body, created by the 1931 Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs.

INCB has 13 members, each elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of five years. INCB members may be re-elected. Ten of the members are elected from a list of persons nominated by Governments. The remaining three members are elected from a list of persons nominated by the World Health Organization (WHO) for their medical, pharmacological or pharmaceutical experience. Members of the Board shall be persons who, by their expertise, competence, impartiality and disinterestedness, will command general confidence. Once they have been elected, INCB members serve impartially in their personal capacity, independently of Governments.

Mandate

The mandate of INCB is to promote Government compliance with the provisions of the international drug control conventions.

The international drug control conventions currently in force are:

- The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1954 as amended by the 1972 Protocol
- The Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971
- The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988

The three conventions are designed to ensure the safe use of potentially dangerous psychoactive substances, as well as to prevent the use of drugs that have no medical value. They recognize that such substances often have legitimate scientific and medicinal uses that must be protected but that the abuse of such substances gives rise to public health, social and economic problems.

About 250 substances are controlled under the conventions. The conventions list the substances in different schedules with levels of control that vary depending on the balance between their therapeutic usefulness and the risk of their abuse, including diversion for illegal purposes.

Activities

Analysis of reports provided by Governments

There are currently more than 180 States parties to the conventions. They provide to INCB estimates and assessments, as well as statistics, on the actual manufacture of, international trade in and consumption of internationally controlled substances. INCB analyses the data to see whether drugs are accounted for at the main stages of production, manufacture and trade. If there are any discrepancies, they are investigated and the causes clarified. INCB also monitors Government control over chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs and cooperates with Governments in preventing the diversion of such chemicals into illicit channels.

Evaluation and support of national efforts

By examining and analyzing the information it receives from more than 200 countries and territories, INCB monitors whether the conventions are being effectively implemented throughout the world. Through its continuous evaluation of national efforts, INCB is able to recommend action and suggest adjustments to both international and national drug control regimes. Where appropriate, the Board recommends to the relevant United Nations organs, specialized agencies and Governments that technical or financial assistance be provided in support of Governments' efforts to comply with their treaty obligations.

Dialogue with Governments

To further the aims of the conventions, INCB maintains ongoing discussions with Governments. If those aims are being endangered by any country, INCB can recommend remedial measures or, as a last resort, propose sanctions against the defaulting country. INCB communicates with Governments, through regular consultations and special missions. Such "quiet diplomacy" has brought about the strengthening of legislation in several countries that have acknowledged the need for coordination of national drug control efforts.

Training for Government officials

To enhance the functioning of national drug control administrations, the INCB secretariat conducts training programmes for drug control administrators. The training focuses on meeting treaty obligations, especially those that relate to cooperation between INCB and parties to the conventions. National administrations may send officials to the INCB secretariat for training. Depending on the availability of funds, regional training seminars are organized in close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime or other competent international organizations, in particular WHO.

Annual report

INCB publishes an annual report on its work. The report provides a comprehensive account of the global drug situation, analyzes trends in drug abuse and drug trafficking and suggests necessary remedial action. Each annual report is supplemented by technical reports on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. The technical reports provide details on estimates of the annual legitimate requirements in each country, as well as data on the licit production, manufacture and consumption of, and trade in, drugs and their precursors worldwide. The reports are submitted to the United Nations Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

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United Nations Commission for International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) **Setting Rules for International Trade and for Commercial Dispute Resolution**

Background

When world trade began to expand dramatically in the 1960s, national governments realized the need for a global set of standards and rules to harmonize and modernize the worldwide assortment of national and regional regulations that until then largely governed international trade. They turned to the United Nations, which in 1966 established the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), recognizing the need for a more active United Nations role in removing legal obstacles to the flow of international trade. 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 Vienna in September 1979. With a staff of 21, the Secretariat assists UNCITRAL in its work; prepares studies, reports and draft texts; conducts legal research; drafts and revises working papers and legislative texts; provides technical legislative assistance to States and prepares publications.

Working Methods

Texts designed to simplify trade transactions and reduce associated costs are adopted by the Commission that meets once a year alternating between New York and Vienna. The substantive preparatory work is carried out by working groups comprising all member States of UNCITRAL, which meet once or twice per year.

Legal 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 Assistance

One of UNCITRAL's priorities is the provision of technical assistance for modernization of trade laws and commercial practices. In addition to promoting understanding of UNCITRAL 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 texts, such as dispute resolution rules.

Case Law on UNCITRAL Texts (CLOUT)

CLOUT is a collection of court decisions and arbitral awards interpreting UNCITRAL texts. CLOUT includes abstracts (i.e. reports) in the six United Nations languages on the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (Vienna, 1980) (CISG), the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (1985, MAL), The Model Law on Electronic Commerce (1996, MLEC) and The Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency (1997, MLCBI). Other texts will be added as case law becomes available. The CLOUT database can be accessed at the UNCITRAL web-site at http://www.uncitral.org/uncitral/en/case_law.html.

Achievements

Since it was established, 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.

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United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Vienna Office Interim
Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

Taking Care of the Mountains and UNEP's Gateway to South Eastern Europe

About UNEP and its office in Vienna

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the voice for the environment in the United Nations system. It is an advocate, educator, catalyst and facilitator, promoting the wise use of the planet's natural assets for sustainable development. UNEP's mission is "to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations".

The UNEP Vienna office is responsible for mountain activities and the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (Mountain Partnership) as well as for the coordination of UNEP programme delivery in South Eastern Europe. UNEP Vienna, as part of the regional office for Europe, supports liaison with organizations based in Vienna and the region.

Protecting the Carpathian Mountains and facilitating sustainable regional development

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians is an international agreement between the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. UNEP services the Interim Secretariat of the Framework Convention, which is hosted by Austria in the Vienna International Centre since 2004. Since the beginning of the Carpathian process, Austria and its Ministry of the Environment has been actively supporting the Carpathian Convention (so to say the younger sister of the Convention for the Protection of the Alps). UNEP Vienna, together with 19 partners in the region, carried out the Carpathian Project and coordinates the development of follow-up projects.

The Mountain Partnership

UNEP Vienna is the global Environmental Reference Centre (ERC) of the Mountain Partnership. The Mountain Partnership is a voluntary alliance of national governments, intergovernmental organizations, local and regional authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, the academic community and other major group representatives who are working together to improve livelihoods, conservation and stewardship throughout the world's mountain landscapes.

Caucasus

UNEP, through its Vienna Office, together with the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus—facilitates cooperation between the countries of the Caucasus—including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia and Turkey, for sustainable mountain development.

Dinaric Arc and Balkans

UNEP Vienna coordinates UNEP programme delivery in the following priority areas:

- Climate change
- Disasters and conflict
- Ecosystem management
- Resource efficiency
- Hazardous substances

With the support of Italy, UNEP, and particularly its Vienna Office, is fostering a consultation process between the countries of South Eastern Europe on a legal framework for the sustainable development of the Dinaric Arc and Balkans, involving Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNEP is also carrying out the Dinaric Arc and Balkans Environment Outlook (DABEO).

UNEP Gateway to South Eastern Europe

Through the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) of UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), UNEP created a solid perspective and basis for UNEP engagement with and support to the South East European region. The ENVSEC Initiative in South Eastern Europe (SEE) is supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), focusing on the trans-boundary cooperation in mountain protected areas, and the risk reduction from mining pollution hotspots.

UNEP Vienna is partner of a project financed by Spain through the Millennium Development Goal Funds (MDGF) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The approved joint programme is designed to address and overcome the significant barriers faced in effectively delivering environmental services and management at the local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

UNEP Vienna is a partner in the UN's One Country Programme in Albania, which enhances development results and impact by bringing together the comparative advantages of the UN system within a single strategic programme. UNEP is the leader of the country team working group on the environment outcome, including promotion of investments in clean technology, conservation of energy and efficient use of natural resources

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www.unep.ch

www.carpathianconvention.org

www.mountainpartnership.org

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2009



UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



30
years
vienna
international
centre

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) **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.

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 as well as public information. 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 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 of the refugee situation through public information, the media, awareness campaigns, the interactive game www.LastExitFlucht.org (winning the State Prize Multimedia and E-Business) and the website www.unhcr.at. UNHCR intervenes directly only in difficult individual cases. It also provides training for government officials and refugee counsellors.

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. With the beginning of the war in former Yugoslavia, 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 and Herzegovina. 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 Austrian Federal Asylum Office 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 Asylum Court, the second and last asylum instance in Austria.

These procedures often take years. During this time, asylum seekers have no work permit. Although the Supreme Court ruled that all asylum seekers who fulfil the conditions as set out in the respective law have the right to get federal care and maintenance, this is not always 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 remained lower than in the recent past. In 2007, some 11,900 asylum applications were lodged, compared to some 12,800 in 2008.

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 common asylum system.

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.

At a global level, 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. In 1956, Austria benefited from the resettlement of tens of thousands of Hungarian refugees to overseas countries.

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United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) **Bringing the Benefits of Space to Humanity**

Space tools offer solutions to numerous areas in the developmental agenda, including food security, disease monitoring, natural resource management, disaster management and tele-education. It is therefore important to the United Nations to bring these benefits of outer space to every part of the world.

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) implements the decisions of the General Assembly, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its two Subcommittees: the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. These intergovernmental fora promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space for social and economic development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries. Other issues on the agenda include space debris, the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, international response to the threat of asteroid impact and implementation of the legal regime in outer space.

UNOOSA carries out the United Nations Programme on Space Applications in support of Member States, in particular developing countries, to share the benefits of space science and technology and their application to achieve sustainable development. Within the framework of the Programme, the Office organizes capacity-building activities to increase awareness of space benefits and to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in space applications in areas such as natural resource management, tele-epidemiology/tele-health and climate change.

Given the inherent global nature and reach of space activities, space science and technology play an ideal role in providing solutions to global problems. In that context, the work of UNOOSA includes implementing the global platform for disaster management (UN-SPIDER), promoting the global search and rescue system (COSPAS-SARSAT), addressing the issues of interoperability and compatibility of global navigation satellite systems through the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG), and overseeing the global array of instruments for studying space weather and the profound impact of the Sun on the Earth.

The Office discharges the Secretary-General's responsibility under international space law, including the maintenance of the Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space, which serves as the central depository of information provided by Member States and international organizations on their satellites. As part of its advocacy role, the Office organizes workshops on space law and policy, and is developing a curriculum in space law. 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 United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs has been committed for almost half a century to bringing the benefits of space to humanity and will continue doing so in the years to come.

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United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA)

30 Years VIC – 30 Years UN Stamps in Vienna

History

On 24 August 1979, one day after the opening of the Vienna International Centre, the United Nations Postal Administration issued its first UN 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 UN headquarters. The first United Nations stamps were issued in U.S. dollar denominations on United Nations Day, 24 October, in 1951. The stamps were an immediate success and sold out within days. 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 UN 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 UN stamps in Austrian schillings on 24 August 1979. Since 1 January 2002, due to the change of currency, Vienna UN-stamps are issued in Euro.

UNPA today

United Nations stamps are now issued simultaneously at UN 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 UN 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.

UN stamps are printed all over the world by security printers, both government printing offices and private security printing firms. UN stamps 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 UN one of the highest-quality producers of stamps among postal administrations.

Mandate

Human rights, the environment, endangered species and peace—to name just a few—are all subjects of universal concern to the peoples of the world and are visualized on the stamps of the United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA). 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.

Not only do United Nations stamps artistically promote the aims of the Organization, they provide income 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 UN stamps used for mailing purposes is reimbursed to the U.S. Postal Service, the Swiss Post or the Austrian Post, as appropriate.

To celebrate its 30th birthday on 24 August 2009, the UNPA office in Vienna will issue a special personalized stamp sheet, available at the permanent UNPA sales counter at the Vienna International Centre at Checkpoint 1.

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United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNRoD)

Following the issuance on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice of the advisory opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNRoD) was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-10/17 of January 2007.

UNRoD is a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly of the United Nations and operates under the administrative authority of the Secretary-General at the site of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) which provides administrative and logistical backstopping. UNRoD's mandate is to serve as a record, in documentary form, of the damage caused to all natural and legal persons concerned as a result of the construction of the Wall by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem.

UNRoD's Office, which was established following the appointment by the Secretary-General of the three independent members of the Board and its Executive Director in 2007, is now fully operational with 18 staff members comprising nine Professional staff, and nine General Service staff.

To fulfil its mandate, UNRoD undertakes outreach activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to inform potential claimants of the existence and purpose of UNRoD and the procedure for filing a claim for registration of damage. UNRoD also assists claimants in completing the official UNRoD claim forms, and collects completed claims forms for processing in Vienna.

UNRoD receives, processes and reviews claims from any natural or legal person who has suffered material damage or loss as a result of the construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. UNRoD's three-member Board has the ultimate authority to decide, based on criteria established by it, whether a loss or damage claimed is to be included in the United Nations Register of Damage or not.

The mandate entrusted to UNRoD is being successfully implemented with the collection, by April 2009, of more than 1,000 claims forms in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Several hundreds of those claims have been reviewed by the Board of UNRoD and included into the Register. Notwithstanding the modest numbers, it signifies the beginning of the existence of the United Nations Register of Damage as had been requested by the General Assembly.



United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation
(UNSCEAR)

Providing a Scientific Basis for Protection Against Radiation

History and mandate

On 3 December 1955 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously approved resolution 913(X), which established the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR). UNSCEAR's mandate is to assess and report levels and effects of exposure to ionizing radiation. Governments and organizations throughout the world rely on the Committee's estimates as the scientific basis for evaluating radiation risk and for establishing protective measures. Over the decades that followed, UNSCEAR became the official international authority on the levels and effects of ionizing radiation, used for peaceful as well as military purposes and derived from natural as well as man-made sources.

The Committee has regularly evaluated the evidence for radiation-induced health effects from studies of the survivors of the atomic bombings in Japan in 1945 and other exposed groups. It has also reviewed advances in scientific understanding of the mechanisms by which radiation-induced health effects can occur. These assessments have provided the scientific foundation used in formulating international protection standards.

The Chernobyl accident in 1986 was a tragic event for its victims and there has been major hardship for those most affected. From early on, UNSCEAR was involved in the assessment of radiation exposures and health effects. In 1988 it published a first account of acute radiation effects in emergency workers and of the global exposures. A more detailed assessment of radiation levels and effects from the accident was published in 2000. More recently the Committee has participated in the Chernobyl Forum, whose important mission covered many aspects of the accident, including the review of radiation health effects. In 2008, the Committee approved for publication an updated assessment of the health and environmental effects of the accident.

In the 1990s, attention had been focused on the radiological legacy of the cold war, with assessments of the radioactive residues from weapons production and testing, and hereditary effects of radiation. The last major reports were approved by the Committee in 2006 and 2008. The 2006 report updated knowledge on the epidemiology of radiation-induced disease (cancer and non-cancer); on so-called non-targeted effects, radiation effects on the immune system, and the effects of radon exposure. The 2008 report updated the Committee's assessments of public, worker and patient exposures to radiation; radiation exposures during accidents; the health effects of the Chernobyl accident; and radiation effects on other species.

Much has changed—with the end of the cold war and the information technology revolution, the role of the Committee as the principal focal point for international information exchange in this important and highly specialized topic has diminished. However, with the flood of new information now available (particularly in the fields of genetics and molecular biology), comes the vital need to review and synthesize it, and to build a scientific consensus for use by policy makers, decision makers and other stakeholders. With important decisions concerning new medical uses of radiation, environmental restoration, waste disposal and the nuclear power option, the role of the Committee in providing authoritative scientific information continues to be central and will be crucial in the future.

Committee members

Twenty-one countries provide the present membership of the Committee, working on behalf of the United Nations: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sudan, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.

States Observers presently include: Belarus, Finland, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Spain and Ukraine.

More than 50 national organizations and several international organizations provide considerable contributions in kind.

Secretariat

The small secretariat in Vienna, which is functionally linked to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), organizes and services the annual sessions and manages the preparation of documents for the Scientific Committee's scrutiny.

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Secretary of UNSCEAR

UNSCEAR Secretariat

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For more detailed information about the Committee and its work, including copies of all its publications, visit the website: www.unscear.org



United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna

Bringing the United Nations Closer to the Public

UNIS Vienna is part of a 63-strong network of United Nations Information Centres spanning the globe, from Accra to Yaoundé, which are part of the Department of Public Information (DPI). They share a common goal: to help fulfill the substantive purposes of the United Nations by communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to the public.

UNIS Vienna plays a dual role: as UN Information Centre it serves four client countries—Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. By serving as the local voice of the UN in these countries, UNIS Vienna aims to promote an informed understanding of the work and goals of the United Nations, by reaching out to media, government, academia, schools and civil society organizations. Furthermore, UNIS provides public information support and promotional services to the substantive programmes of the United Nations based in Vienna, and acts as Secretariat to the United Nations Communications Group in Vienna.

What services does UNIS Vienna offer?

- 1. Media accreditation:** If you are a journalist based in Vienna, and wish to access the Vienna International Centre, your first port of call is the UNIS media accreditation office. The office issues annual accreditation to bona-fide representatives of the media who are writing on UN system issues, on the basis of certain criteria. For more information, call (+43-1) 26060 3342 or write to: press@unvienna.org. As a journalist accredited to the UN, you will receive access to the Vienna International Centre, the latest information on the happenings in the UN world in Vienna and beyond, invitations to events and press briefings being organized at the VIC and more.
- 2. Library:** the UNIS library is a rich repository of information from all over the United Nations system. Reference documents, Security Council resolutions, the latest sales publications, the latest UN reports and more are available in the library, along with UN posters and handout material on a variety of subjects. The United Nations Information Service reference library in Vienna is open to visitors, journalists and students (upon prior appointment) and to all UN staff members. A wide range of reference material on all aspects of the United Nations System is available, especially on issues dealt with by the Vienna-based UN organizations dealing with drugs control, crime prevention and outer space affairs. You can also browse through and pick up a wide range of information and promotional material free-of-charge (handouts, reports, posters). The library also offers sales publications in limited quantities free of cost.
- 3. Lecture programme:** If you are interested in hearing a UN expert brief you on subjects ranging from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, or why the world still needs the UN, UNIS Vienna can arrange a briefing or a series of lectures for your group, simply by contacting: lectures@unvienna.org
- 4. Civil society liaison:** Over 1,500 civil society organizations with strong information programmes on issues of concern to the UN are associated with the UN Department of Public Information, linking the UN with people around the world. The NGO liaison service of UNIS Vienna maintains a distribution list of approximately 400 local NGO representatives, research institutes, political think tanks and initiatives of civil society. If you are interested in the work of the UN in specific areas, contact us to join the list, or to work with UNIS Vienna on specific themes, such as the organization of special United Nations observances (i.e. International Peace Day, Human Rights Day, etc.).

5. **Website:** UNIS Vienna maintains a website providing information resources and current updates on the work of the United Nations and the Vienna-based organizations in English, German, Hungarian, Slovak and Slovene language versions at: www.unis.unvienna.org

6. **Publications and information products:** UNIS Vienna produces a wide range of information products on the work of the United Nations and current international issues, including German, Hungarian, Slovak and Slovene language versions of press releases, backgrounders and Secretary-General's statements, as well as information on the work of the Vienna-based organizations in English and other languages. All publications are available on our website at: www.unis.unvienna.org

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The VIC – Worth a Visit

The gates of the Vienna International Centre are open to everyone wishing to learn more about the work of the United Nations in Vienna. A Visitors 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 Visitors 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.

An impressive art collection, including works by leading Austrian artists and gifts from Member States, is also part of the tour. 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.

There are also special programmes for school groups and children during the summer holidays. A teachers' toolkit provides basic information in German on the tours, as well as teaching materials to download (please see www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/de/lehrer_info.html)

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 Monday-Friday between 09:30 hours and 17:00 hours.

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 approximately one hour.

In addition, the Visitors Service offers lectures by UN staff members on the UN in general and the work of the Vienna-based Organizations. Arrangements for lectures in combination with a guided tour should be made in advance by writing (minimum six weeks prior to the requested date) to: lectures@unvienna.org

Visitors Service

Reservations and Information

Visitors Service
Vienna International Centre
PO Box 500, 1400 Vienna
Telephone: (+43-1) 26060-3328
Fax: (+43-1) 26060-5991
Email: tours@unvienna.org

Website: www.unis.unvienna.org

How to get there

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

The Visitors Centre

The Visitors Centre is the welcoming gateway to the Vienna International Centre, and it is open to the public from Monday through Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 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, “Kaisermühlen—Vienna International Centre”.

At the core of the Visitors 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 Visitors Centre houses a coffee shop, a hairdresser and a flower shop.

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Civil Society Participation at the Vienna International Centre

Background

From the very beginning, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been involved in the work of the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies. NGOs can apply for and are subsequently granted consultative status depending on the scope of their work. The General Assembly Resolution 1996/31 regulates the day-to-day interaction of NGOs in consultative status with the UN, mainly with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and its functional commissions. According to this resolution, NGOs have the right to attend UN meetings as observers, can submit written and oral statements within the scope of their competence and may be asked by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to carry out specific studies and prepare special papers. They have access to documentation of meetings of Commissions, Ad Hoc Committees, expert groups, etc. They have access to press documentation services, to the UN libraries and can meet within the premises of the UN for conferences and smaller meetings on the work of the ECOSOC. The Secretariat has to provide appropriate seating arrangements during public meetings of the General Assembly dealing with matters in the economic, social and related fields. NGOs in consultative status are obliged to submit quadrennial reports to the Council Committee on NGOs, describing their activities specifically as regards the support they have given to the work of the United Nations.

The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)

An umbrella organization, The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO), was formed in 1948 for NGOs in consultative status as an independent, international, not-for-profit membership association, which currently has more than 550 members. In order to provide assistance and support to its members, CONGO has offices in Geneva, New York and Vienna. CONGO's task is to facilitate the participation of NGOs in United Nations debates and decisions and to assist them.

It also has an important role in mobilizing NGOs to organize parallel activities to major UN global meetings, including the first worldwide NGO forum on Human Rights in 1968, followed by planning and organizing the NGO Forum during all the UN World Conferences on Women, from Copenhagen (1975) to Beijing (1995) and an NGO Forum during the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, to name but a few.

Since 2007, CONGO has been organizing Civil Society Development fora to follow the themes of the yearly ECOSOC meetings more closely. These forums take place parallel to the ECOSOC meetings and are followed up by briefings at the other UN seats in order to give as many NGO representatives as possible the chance to participate.

CONGO supports the creation and work of the NGO Committees by providing model statutes to guarantee democratic procedures and also follows their activities on a regular basis by asking for periodic reports to their Board Meetings.

The NGO Community at the VIC

There are more than 2,000 NGOs accredited to ECOSOC, and almost half of them have representatives accredited to the United Nations (Vienna). The NGO Committees based in Vienna include committees on the Status of Women, Ageing, Narcotic Drugs, Crime Prevention, Families, Peace and Human Rights. The NGO Committees meet regularly in the VIC: these meetings serve either briefing and information dissemination, preparation of conferences and NGO forums or discussing upcoming UN activities. The NGO Committees give themselves statutes and elect their chairpersons and other officers every two years. English is used as the working language during meetings and for reports or minutes.

For the past 30 years, NGOs have participated regularly in all Open House events of the VIC as well as organized parallel fora and ancillary meetings to sessions of the Commissions on the Status of Women (till 1993), the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Congress on the Prevention of Crime while participating fully in the annual deliberations of the official governmental meetings. NGOs have been instrumental in preparations for the holding of and follow-up to the International Year of the Family.

Meetings organized by the international NGO community accredited to the VIC, conferences consultations and symposia both held at the VIC and in other locations in Vienna (Diplomatic Academy, University of Vienna) include: parallel meetings to the 1983 First World Assembly on Ageing, including a tree-planting ceremony in the Rathaus Park; preparations for the World Conference on Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance (2001); a number of mini fora and symposia on all aspects of drug addiction and prevention; a symposium in preparation of the World Summit of the Information Society on “Media, ICTs and Women” (2002); a conference as follow-up to the WTO summit in Cancun titled “The world after Cancun, a new direction or the end of the WTO” (2003); a Human Rights seminar “Women’s Rights—Human Rights, our vision for the future” (1998); a conference on the Optional Protocol to the Convention against all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) (2000); two symposia on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (FLS): “Making the FLS work...” (1990) and “Developing Strategies for Action” leading to the Regional Fora and the NGO Forum ‘95 in Beijing (1993) as well as the ECE Regional NGO preparatory consultations in 1994 to prepare for Beijing’s World Conference on Women.

More recently, UNIS Vienna, together with the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women and the CONGO office in Vienna organized a panel discussion on “Women and HIV/AIDS, Advocacy: Prevention and Empowerment” to highlight International Women’s Day 2004.

In autumn 2007, CONGO Vienna organized an NGO Forum on Outer Space, which initiated discussions on how to involve NGOs in more technical issues. In cooperation with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the project “Beyond 2008” has been initiated by the Vienna Committee on Narcotic Drugs, which organized an important NGO Forum at VIC in July 2008, which resulted in a joint declaration of all the present NGOs. Work continued in March 2009 during the Meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with parallel events.

In order to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008, a symposium organized by the relevant NGO Committees and CONGO taking up various aspects of the declaration and linking them to actual NGO projects was held.

For information contact:

CONGO Office in Vienna
Vienna International Centre
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Events – Visits – Conferences at the VIC

Highlights from the last 30 Years

Since its opening in 1979, the Vienna International Centre (VIC), the Hofburg Congress Centre and the Austria Centre 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, on 25 April 2008 Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik jointly inaugurated a new, modern and climate-friendly state-of-the-art conference facility at the VIC, the M-Building. In October 2005 Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the IAEA were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for efforts “to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way.” On 18 December 1989, soldiers and officers representing Austria’s participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions were awarded medals at the VIC in recognition of the Austrian share of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peacekeeping troops. 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.

Visits

During the past 30 years, eminent personalities and dignitaries from all over the world have visited the VIC. These include:

Five Secretaries-General of the United Nations (Kurt Waldheim, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Kofi Annan, Ban Ki-moon)

King Carl XVI Gustaf (November 2007) and Queen Silvia of Sweden (November 2007, March 2009)

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 United States President Jimmy Carter, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Austrian Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel and Elena Bonner.

Queen Fabiola of Belgium (October 1994)

Mother Teresa (March 1987)

His Holiness Pope John Paul II (September 1983)

Prince Talal of Saudi Arabia (July 1982)

Conferences

Among a number of conferences and meetings which took place during the past 30 years, the following were of particular significance:

The 52nd session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (11-20 March 2009) adopted a Draft Political Declaration and Plan of Action on the future of drug control at the conclusion of its high-level segment which took place from 11-12 March 2009. Heads of State and Ministers reviewed progress in drug control since the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on drugs in 1998 (UNGASS), and agreed on further steps to reduce the threat posed by drugs to health and security.

The Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT, 13-15 February 2008) mobilized state and non-state players to eradicate human trafficking by reducing both the vulnerability of potential victims and the demand for exploitation in all its forms; ensuring adequate protection and support to those who do fall victim, as well as efficient prosecution of the criminals involved.

The Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government (26-29 June 2007) entitled “Building Trust in Government” highlighted the importance of improving public administration in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

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.

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 Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Protection of the Ozone Layer (18-22 March 1985) adopted the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, 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 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 first big conference to take place in the VIC 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.

For information contact:

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