

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON IAEA

On 3 November 1959, the General Assembly of the United Nations considered the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the first report to cover a full operational year of the Agency - 1 July 1959 to 30 June 1959, more recent developments having been summarized in a preface. At the end of the debate the Assembly adopted a resolution, submitted jointly by Czechoslovakia, the Union of South Africa and the United Arab Republic, taking note of the report.

Presenting the report to the Assembly, the IAEA Director General, Mr. Sterling Cole, recalled that when he addressed the Assembly in 1958, IAEA had been engaged primarily in organizational and preparatory tasks. The 1958-59 period, on the other hand, was "a year of considerable progress in the Agency's substantive programme." He said: "The shakedown voyage of our ship is over. The vessel is now on its way. Admittedly, there is a long distance yet to go before many of the objectives which attended its launching are attained. But we feel that the Agency's present course is a realistic one, which responds to the needs of the international society, and recognizes the limitations within which the Agency must now operate."

Referring to some of the important aspects of the Agency's activities, Mr. Cole pointed out that technical assistance, which had continued to be a great part of its work, had been considerably accelerated by its participation in the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. He also drew attention to the initiation of activities for the supply of nuclear materials and noted that the Board of Governors had given provisional approval to a set of principles for the application of Agency safeguards against the diversion of such materials to non-peaceful uses and that detailed regulations were being worked out within that framework.

As to other fields of activity, Mr. Cole said three were of particular interest to the United Nations because of its own work in related fields. One was assistance in promoting the production of electric power from nuclear energy - a subject in the study of which the Agency had received invaluable co-operation from the United Nations and its specialized bodies. Another area of common interest was the organization of scientific conferences. Mr. Cole said: "As our programmes develop we plan to cover by selected meetings, and at appropriate intervals, all aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Should the General Assembly decide to convene a third Geneva-type conference at some future date, I feel certain that the Agency would be happy to share the sponsorship and to provide such support and assistance as we may have



IAEA's annual report being presented to the United Nations General Assembly by Director General Sterling Cole (extreme right on rostrum). Seated with him, front row, left to right, United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, C. De Freitas-Valle (Brazil) who presided, and Andrew W. Cordier, Executive Assistant to Secretary General. Second row, extreme left: Ralph J. Bunche, UN Under Secretary for Special Political Affairs (UN photo)

at our disposal." The third field for useful collaboration was that of radiation protection, many aspects of which were of direct concern to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

In the debate on the report, Mr. B.G. Fourie (South Africa) said his delegation was gratified by the progress made by the Agency which, he thought, would concentrate on three major spheres of work in the immediate future: co-ordination and development of standards of health and safety, technical assistance, and improvement of channels of information on all aspects of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. About long-term goals, Mr. Fourie said that the switch to nuclear power would be an inevitable development and it was not too early to start preparing for it. Referring to the decision of the Powers concerned to choose Vienna as the headquarters for any organization that might eventually be set up for the control of atomic tests, he said it was conceivable that IAEA might be able to assist, by the provision of research facilities and otherwise, in the solution of some technical problems facing the proposed organization.

Mr. Armand Berard (France) observed that the Agency had not played its role as "a broker in nuclear materials." The result, Mr. Berard said, had been that the control machinery provided in the Agency's Statute to prevent the diversion of materials to non-peaceful uses, had "remained a dead letter so far."

He pleaded for moderation in the field of safeguards and urged that over-rigid regulations should not be set up. He mentioned some of the useful work done by the Agency in the two important fields of technical assistance and international regulation of radiation problems.

Mr. C.W.A. Schurmann (Netherlands) also referred to the Agency's accomplishments in these two fields and said it had done a remarkable job within its limited financial means. At the same time, he said that much of what had been originally envisaged for the Agency had not yet been achieved.

Mr. Harold Riegelman (USA) expressed gratification at the Agency's progress report and said the Agency was "uniquely ready and able" to become a main channel through which the more advanced countries could direct their combined efforts to assist atomic energy development in many areas of the world. The United States delegation believed that more and more countries would turn to the Agency for their requirements of nuclear fuel. Secondly, there had been a notable expansion of the Agency's training and education programme. Thirdly, its technical assistance missions had given "invaluable advice" on the development of national atomic energy programmes. And fourthly, its activities in the field of health and safety were of great value. In these four important areas, said Mr. Riegelman, the Agency was "becoming an indispensable servant of the peaceable atom".

Mr. Franz Matsch (Austria) said that the Agency had made and was making constant and significant progress in making the benefits of the peaceful uses of atomic energy available to Member States.

Mr. Wallace B. Nesbitt (Canada) welcomed the progress in developing a system of safeguards against the diversion of Agency assistance to military purposes. He also noted the progress made in other areas of work and emphasized that if the Agency were to realise its full potential all Member Governments must see to it that it had adequate resources and that tangible progress was made towards agreement on a practicable and workable system of safeguards.

Mr. M. D. Yakovlev (USSR) noted that the Agency had done certain work in assisting international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic

energy. There were, however, a number of shortcomings, among which he mentioned a disproportionate attention to the elaboration of a system of control and inspection. He also emphasized that so long as atomic energy continued to be a part of the armament of States there could be no question of its large-scale utilization for peaceful purposes. The prohibition of atomic weapons would "open the door wide" to further expansion of the Agency's activities.

Dr. Koto Matsudaira (Japan) said the Agency had made steady progress during the past year in the discharge of its main functions. Japan had set a precedent by concluding an agreement with the Agency for the supply of three tons of natural uranium.

Mr. Jiri Nosek (Czechoslovakia) said the Agency should play a more active part than it had hitherto done in trying to ensure that nuclear energy was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. He criticised certain features of the Agency's organization and work, but noted with satisfaction that it had already achieved some good results in its activities.

Mr. Michael Comay (Israel) spoke of the development of his country's co-operation with the Agency.

Mr. Harold Beeley (UK) said the Agency's annual report provided evidence of the useful development of its activities. He welcomed the studies undertaken by the Agency on the applicability of nuclear power to the economic needs of the less developed areas and the work on formulating recommendations and codes of practice for health and safety. He could not agree with the Soviet representative that the Agency should not devote the attention that it did to ensuring that its assistance was not diverted to military purposes.

Mr. Constantin Nicuta (Romania) mentioned some of the "positive aspects" in the activities of the Agency as well as some of its "shortcomings." He thought that it was the duty of the Agency to work actively for an agreement on the banning of atomic weapons and tests.

Dr. H.R. Wei (Republic of China) said he was satisfied with the Agency's growth.