NEWS FROM IAEA HEADQUARTERS

Two more countries have joined the Agency - Panama and Jordan - bringing IAEA membership up to 96.

Mr. Ginige Richard Walter de Silva (Ceylon) has been appointed Director of the Division of Conference and General Services of the Agency.

Born in 1911 at Nugegeda, Ceylon, Mr. de Silva obtained his B.Sc. in Physics at London University and his M.A. in Physics and Mathematics at Cambridge University. He has had a long career in the Civil Service, mainly in the administrative, commercial and finance branches of government.

Mr. de Silva took over from Mr. Arthur E. Barrett, Chief of the Conference and Engineering Services, who had been Acting Director of the Division for a long period of time, and who will be leaving the Agency later this year to take up work elsewhere.

From the early days of IAEA in 1957, Mr. Barrett has been closely associated with the establishment of the Agency's temporary headquarters in Vienna. He has been in charge of the planning and design of the technical facilities for the various conference installations and responsible for the servicing of all the General Conference sessions since 1958. In fact, Mr. Barrett has played an essential part in the creation of the Vienna Congress Centre in the former Hofburg Imperial Palace.

Educated at Cambridge and London Universities, Mr. Barrett has had some 35 years of public service, first in the BBC in London and subsequently with the United Nations in New York.

IAEA SENDS OUT SAMPLES OF URANIUM ORE

Governments and organizations interested in developing uranium resources will be assisted by a new service, now being inaugurated by the Agency's laboratories, for the distribution of reference samples of uranium ores. This is an addition to the service which began at Seibersdorf in January 1962 for the distribution of calibrated radionuclides, and which has met with a steadily increasing demand. *

Uranium deposits consisting of ores with a uranium content in the range 0.5 - 0.05 per cent occur in a number of countries, including developing countries and can present considerable analytical difficulties. In 1962 the Agency asked Member States whether they would be interested in receiving reference samples of uranium ores to assist them in checking their methods

* *Described in IAEA Bulletin, April 1964.*

of chemical analysis. The response encouraged the Agency to proceed. There is a multiplicity of types of uranium ores and, initially, three of the most commonly occurring have been selected - torbernite, uraninite and carnotite. Member States have provided the laboratory with supplies of these three types of ore.

In order to determine the uranium content, samples are sent to leading laboratories throughout the world, so as to arrive at the most accurate values possible. This work has proved to be useful to the laboratories themselves; in searching for reasons for discrepancies between the different collaborating laboratories, they enlarge their own knowledge and improve their methods.

The reference samples are sent out in the form of fine powder, and are available to atomic energy commissions, research laboratories or mining companies. The requesting laboratory, having worked out the analytical process best suited to its needs, is then able to check its results by analysing an IAEA reference sample of known uranium content.

By the end of 1966, reference samples will be available of the three ores mentioned, and later also of pure uranium oxide and of uranium oxide containing trace impurities, the last being useful for checking methods of analysing trace elements in uranium.

Meanwhile, requests are increasing for the other samples being supplied from the Seibersdorf laboratories. During 1965, twenty different calibrated radionuclides were provided, more than 1500 samples being sent out. Other radionuclides being added to the range are carbon-14, calcium-45, calcium-47, cobalt-58, silver-110m, europium-152, iridium-192 and radium-228. Some solid calibrated gamma-emitting sources will be provided for calibrating dosimeters; these will have activities in the millicurie range. In addition, solid beta-emitting sources will be developed. Another service, designed to help health and safety monitoring, is the provision of environmental and biological materials which have been "spiked" with known amounts of radionuclides.

These and other services which the laboratories are providing for Member States are being developed by gradual stages. The programme is essentially flexible, and is intended to be adapted to the demonstrated requirements of Member States for work which of its nature is best carried out on an international basis.