

UNSCEAR 50th Anniversary Reception

30. Mai 2006, 18.00 Uhr

Rathaus, Stadtsenatssitzungssaal

Dear Delegates and members of UN organisations and related organisations!

Dear Director General!

Mr Blix!

Your Excellencies!

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vienna City Hall on behalf of our Mayor, Michael Häupl, but also on my own behalf as local Minister for Cultural Affairs and Science.

Our City Hall is one of the splendid buildings on the Ringstraße boulevard dating from the late 19th century – a period known as Gruenderzeit here in Vienna. It is also part of the Historic Centre of Vienna, which was officially declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site two years ago. Presently you are in the room, where the City government usually gets together and takes its decisions.

It is indeed a privilege for me and for the City of Vienna that you have chosen Vienna for the venue of this conference and above all to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNSCEAR.

Austria and the City of Vienna have long recognized the importance of the work of UNSCEAR. Living where we do in Europe – the former Iron Curtain is only a few kilometres away from here – Austrians and the Viennese have always been concerned about the environment. In 1986 the Chernobyl accident caused great unease here. We take particular note of the important work of UNSCEAR on environmental radiation matters and in providing an independent and scientific basis in your important work.

As some of you may know, when the question arose about moving the UNSCEAR secretariat from New York, it was the initiative of the Austrian government to offer Vienna as its new home. The Secretariat has now been here since 1974, and I trust that the Committee has benefited from the Viennese hospitality and infrastructure as much as we have from your work.

I would like to wish the delegates of the 54th session of UNSCEAR every success in their current work. On behalf of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, I would also like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to the Committee on the occasion of its 50th anniversary and wish it every success in its important and challenging work.

Finally, let me remind you that our city is here for you to enjoy. Vienna offers a wide variety of cultural activities for all interests and tastes. The Vienna Spring Festival just started and there are so many individual attractions for you to see, starting from the MuseumsQuartier Wien, the Albertina and the Palais Liechtenstein to the three Opera Houses we have.

I do sincerely hope that your schedule is not too tight; just feel free to select your personal favourites from our cultural menu, and make the most of your stay in Vienna.